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Public Education's Enemy #1?

see page 4

PRESIDENT'S VIEWPOINT

The Limits of Legislation

The Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. would have celebrated his 75th birthday in January. In all the days of sadness since that saddest of days in April 1968, I can think of no time when our nation more desperately needed his guidance.

Perhaps the Reverend King—perhaps he alone—could stem the violence that today bloodies our land, pierces hope, and stains our nation's character.

Dr. King's greatest gift was his capacity to sting our social conscience. He told us again and again that violence multiplies violence, adding deeper darkness to an already dark night. Through this mountain of a man, the gospel of nonviolence became a force for transforming the principles of justice into legislative mandate.

This legacy we know well. But today the part of the King legacy we must reclaim is the part that is less often noted and less often heeded. I'm referring here to his understanding of the *limits* of legislation.

Dr. King knew that our laws must change, that they must become consonant with the principles of the U.S. Constitution. But he also knew that civilization—civilization in the most profound, most meaningful sense—must rest on a sturdier foundation.

NEA President
Keith Geiger

Dr. King called this foundation "the invisible inner law" that etches on our hearts the conviction that "love is mankind's most potent weapon for social transformation."

Throughout his too-short life, Dr. King tried to teach us that justice is the product not of our criminal code, but of "inner attitudes that lawbooks cannot regulate and jails cannot rectify."

In his final book, published posthumously, King wrote that "court orders and federal enforcement agencies are of inestimable value" in maintaining social order. But to attain the greater goal—a community united by bonds of sympathy and respect—"something must touch our hearts and touch our souls so that we come together spiritually."

I find myself reflecting on this issue—the issue of the distinction between legislation that prohibits vicious actions, and morality that encourages noble actions—not merely because this is the time of year we officially honor Dr. King's memory. Rather, my meditation arises from an attempt to make sense of this blood-stained moment that mocks all that the Reverend King lived for and loved for and died for.

The teachings of Dr. King ought to convince us that if we are to end the mindless menace of violence, the law is not enough.

Last Fall our Association helped secure passage of the Brady Bill. And we are proud of this accomplishment. But the Brady Bill is not enough.

Tighter gun control is necessary, but not enough. More prisons are necessary, but not enough. Education and expanded programs that offer a route out of grinding poverty are necessary, but not enough. More police on the streets are necessary, but not enough. The war against drugs is necessary, but not enough.

Taken together, these measures can move us forward, but not far enough.

If we are to cleanse our blood-stained land, we must reach farther and reach higher. In Dr. King's words: "We must not consider it unpatriotic to raise certain basic questions about our national character. *A new set of values must be born.*"

What we need, more than laws, is a replacement for the mercenary mindset, the pure greed, that is the *only* rationale for the manufacture of the 9-millimeter semiautomatic pistol that turned a New York commuter train into a human slaughterhouse. Again, I quote the Reverend King: "Our economy must become more person-centered and less profit-centered."

What we need, more than laws, is to spread wide the understanding—expressed by Dr. King at his most eloquent—that "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

The violence of our times affects us all, makes victims of us all. Let us at least consider the possibility that we are more likely to find a lasting remedy in the storehouse of conscience than in the courthouse of law.

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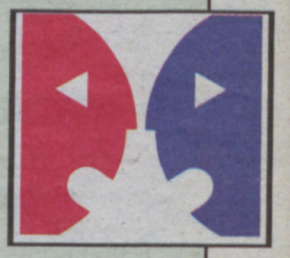

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NATIONAL NEWS

Health Care Reform: What's in It for You?

Plenty. Whether you're guarding Cadillac coverage or barely keeping an old jalopy together, you stand to gain from national health care reform.

"Right now we have an excellent health insurance plan," says Bridgeport, Connecticut, fifth grade teacher Kathleen Sochacki. But, she adds, it hasn't been easy to hang on to.

Physicians Health Services—a local HMO—pays nearly 100 percent of medical costs. It allows Sochacki and her family to see doctors outside of the HMO for a small fee, and frees them from paperwork headaches.

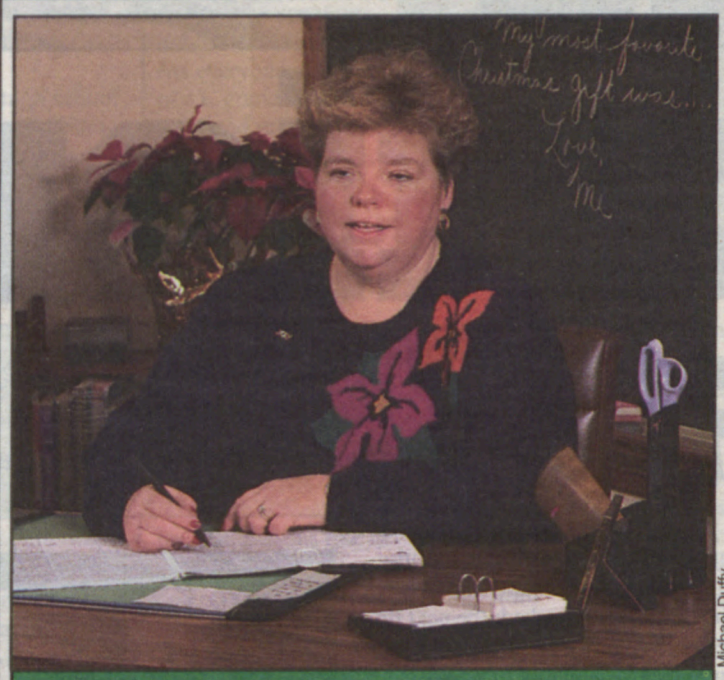
Until last year, members of the Bridgeport Education Association (BEA) had the choice of two plans—the HMO or Blue Cross/Blue Shield. Then Blue Cross pulled out. "It wasn't our decision," Sochacki explains. "They felt they were losing money, so they left."

Still, most BEA members are pleased with their HMO coverage. So pleased, in fact, that they accepted a minuscule pay increase last year to keep it. Even with the near-freeze on salary, they had to swallow a $5 co-pay for prescriptions.

But BEA begins bargaining again soon, and as chair of the insurance committee, Sochacki's concerned. "I'm afraid that we'll be looking at severe cutbacks in health insurance coverage—or a salary freeze." The worst case scenario: both.

BEA members are concerned for their students, as well. "We're an urban district," Sochacki says. "We have students who have no type of health care at all.

"Everyone is looking to Washington for help. We need to eliminate wasteful spending, keep a lid on cost increases, and monitor quality of care. And we need to make sure that health care isn't given only to those who can afford it."



Michael Duffy

"I feel lucky for the coverage I've got," says Connecticut teacher Kathleen Sochacki, "but I'm worried it will slip away."

This month, the Congressional debate on national health care reform will begin in earnest—and not a moment too soon.

A new study by the Employee Benefit Research Institute says two million more Americans—400,000 of them, children—lost their health insurance last year. A total of 38.5 million people, roughly 17 percent of the nonelderly U.S. population, are now uninsured.

Before the details of any plan are debated, your representatives in Washington will have to decide if they believe government should guarantee affordable health insurance for all.

They'll have to decide if they want all Americans to have comprehensive benefits. And they'll have to determine what roles government and the marketplace should play in controlling costs and assuring quality care.

NEA's policy—set by the 9,000 delegates to last year's Representative Assembly—is to support the ultimate goal of a national, tax-supported single-payer health care system.

NEA will support health care reform measures that move the United States closer to that goal, providing they assure universal coverage, quality assurance, and cost controls.

Of all the competing plans now being discussed on Capital Hill, only two meet NEA's criteria—the Clinton plan, called the Health Security Act, and a single-payer plan sponsored by Sen. Paul Wellstone (D-MN) in the Senate and Jim McDermott (D-WA) in the House.

"There's a clear dividing line," explains NEA chief lobbyist Michael Edwards, "between those that provide universal coverage and comprehensive benefits and those that don't. These two do, the rest don't."

NEA played a key role in shaping and improving the Clinton plan prior to its release. Still, NEA doesn't support every detail in its 1,343 pages. As Edwards says, "There's no perfect plan out there, but the Clinton plan is a solid starting point."

In addition to universal coverage and comprehensive benefits, the Clinton plan would put strong emphasis on preventive care, including prenatal and well-baby care.

The Health Security Act would preserve choice of health care providers, implement cost containment measures, provide coverage for early retirees, and allow employees to bargain for additional benefits. It also would provide states with the option of adopting single-payer health care systems. And it would give additional funding for school-based health education and service programs.

NEA will work to ensure that any legislation that comes out of Congress treats public and private employers with parity, specifically limits insurance companies' administrative costs and limits what hospitals and doctors can charge, and maintains choice of plans for all families, regardless of income.

"Hundreds of political decisions will shape the eventual legislation," Edwards says. "What is proposed today isn't what we'll end up with."

That's where NEA members come in. "Now's the time to tell your representatives what you want them to stand for," says Edwards. "It's going to be a long battle, but the critical framework will be built in the next few months."

—Stefanie Weiss

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

This winter will see the start of intense congressional debate over the shape of national health care reform.

You can track the course of that debate—and help shape that debate yourself—through NEA Online, the Association's new electronic network.

Inside the NEA Online Legislative & Political Arena area, you'll find updates on those aspects of the health care reform debate that NEA is most closely tracking. Check this area for advisories on messages that your member of Congress needs to hear as the health care debate heats up.

NEA Online is part of America Online, a larger electronic network. Check the America Online White House Forum for the full text of media briefings and addresses on health care delivered by either President Clinton or top Clinton Administration officials

For details on how you can subscribe to NEA Online, turn to page 28.

HEROES & ZEROES

For the largest single gift ever made to American public education, gasps of appreciation to business leader and former U.S. ambassador to Great Britain Walter Annenberg, who recently donated $500 million to support promising K-12 public school reform efforts nationwide. On behalf of millions of public school employees, sincere thanks for the vote of confidence in public education.

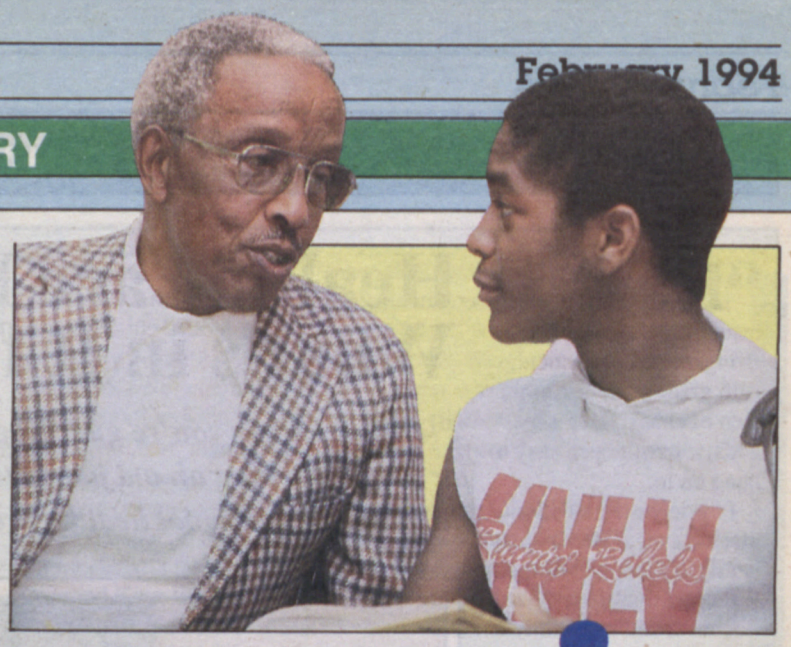
Two of the recipients and their grants are: the National Institute for School Reform at Brown University, $50 million, and the Education Commission of the States, which helps states implement school reforms, $15 million.

The We-Hate-Pageants-But-Like-This-Winner Award goes to Miss Teen USA Charlotte Lopez. Crowns and scepters aside, Lopez has lived in six foster homes over the past 13 years. Her message: "I want people to know that foster children aren't all delinquents. A lot are just like me—good kids who need homes." Using her title to push for foster care reform, Lopez is busy with media appearances, an upcoming book, and a TV movie. Hype, for a good cause, is no vice.

A Slime-of-the-Times Award for Casey Swaney, a copy editor and occasional columnist for the Martins Ferry, Ohio, *Times Leader*. In a recent piece, Swaney claims the salaries of public school staff "rob the public blind." He pulls out the ridiculous teachers-don't-work-full-time argument, then says teachers "do not even begin to compare in monetary worth to doctors or lawyers for the preparation, knowledge, and skill involved in the profession." His finale: "Is it too late for all of us to become school teachers?" Forget teaching, Mr. Swaney. Your talents lie in fiction writing.

The On-Board Award goes to the C-SPAN School Bus, a $500,000 field trip on wheels. Now on an eight-month national tour, the 45-foot bus—equipped with classroom, TV studio, and production facility—brings the world of Washington to your students nationwide. The tour's top priority: stopping at high schools and colleges in 80 communities to show educators how they can use C-SPAN, the cable industry's public affairs network, in their classrooms.

COVER STORY



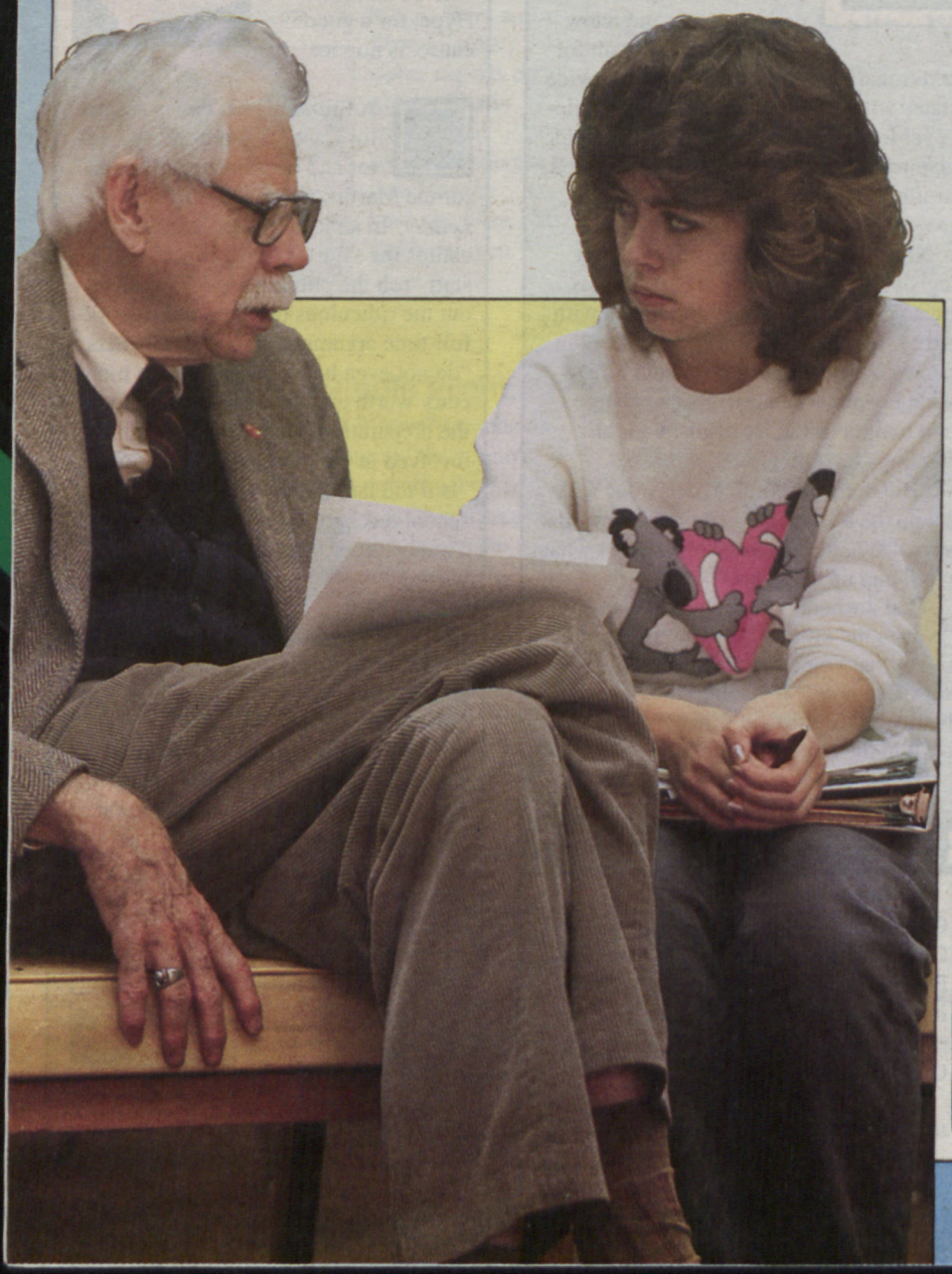
Are Seniors Public Education's Enemy #1?

Senior citizens have a reputation for voting against tax levies. But a little effort can help seniors become advocates for better schools.

School proponents in Arizona's Peoria district will never again underestimate senior citizen power at the polls. Several years ago, voters rejected school bonds, one after another, that would have provided money to build new schools in one of the fastest-growing areas of the state.

The reason why the school bonds were failing was clear: seniors living in Sun City, a large retirement community within the district, were not only voting en masse against the bonds, they were working hard to get out the negative vote, even organizing transportation to the polls for those who needed it.

Finally, to help the district get its badly needed schools—the alternative was triple sessions for students—the Arizona legislature broke up the district, completely eliminating Sun City. The strategy worked: the next time a bond was on the ballot, it passed.



The Peoria situation is an extreme example of what can happen when seniors decide that public education issues don't concern them.

The Peoria example also shows why, today, with the number of senior citizens growing—currently 31 million over age 65—and the number of parents with school-aged children declining all across the country, senior support for public education is more important than ever.

But it's not just the growing numbers of seniors that's significant. It's the fact that they vote in greater numbers than any other age group. Even more important, seniors are more likely than younger registered voters to vote in an election "off year" or in a special election, when most education tax initiatives are on the ballot.

But these statistics, as more and more NEA members are coming to understand, don't need to be alarming. By reaching out to senior citizens, by helping seniors understand that public education is everybody's business, NEA members are helping seniors become allies in the fight for quality schools.

NEA has recently launched a campaign to expand this outreach to senior citizens.

The Association is asking NEA-R locals to sponsor programs aimed at garnering support for public education among older voters. Members of these chapters would help fellow seniors better understand the issues and how they touch each and every one of us.

Mike Spinelli

Oakland, California's May Monroe's been active in schools for 45 years; she currently serves as the district's PTA coordinator.

"We can't put our heads in the sand and ignore public education, or our acts will come back to haunt us," says NEA-Retired President Marian Conrad. "If the older generation had done this to us 40 or 50 years ago, where would we be today?"

For many NEA-Retired chapters—and active locals as well—rallying support for public education is nothing new. Here are some of the ways NEA affiliates are helping seniors understand the issues.

➤ Members of Nevada's Washoe County Teachers Association-Retired (WCTA-R)—Conrad's own local—were recently successful in their attempt to get a school bond issue passed. The bond provided for a computer lab in every school and a computer in every classroom.

Working with the Washoe County Teachers Association, WCTA-R members talked to many community groups, but particularly targeted fellow seniors. They stressed that education isn't about "my kid versus your kid," says WCTA President Elaine Lancaster. "Rather, it's about America's future."

➤ In Connecticut, members of the

Program grants from NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education support efforts to bring seniors into the schools.

COVER STORY

Ellington Education Association (EEA) have been reaching out to actually bring seniors into the schools.

EEA President Fred Colosimo explains that since the effort started a year and a half ago, there have been two teacher-student-senior citizen holiday concerts and an Association-sponsored bingo night for seniors.

A few seniors have enrolled in regular high school classes, and many take advantage of the opportunity to attend high school basketball games at no charge.

"We're trying to make the high school a community center," explains Colosimo. "There's a senior citizen village about a mile from the school, where we pick up and drop off folks."

➤ In Virginia, NEA-Retired member John Duncan speaks regularly to active and retired state employees on behalf of the Virginia Education Association-Retired, the Fairfax County Education Association, the Fairfax County Retired Educators, and other retiree organizations.

Duncan says one of the best ways to explain school tax initiatives is to "equate them to home mortgages—we pay for building or refurbishing schools over 25 years or so, with interest, as we use the improved facilities. Paying for these items out of the yearly operating budget would be impossible."

Duncan tells his audiences, too, that like police and fire departments, "schools enhance all of society. We may never use them, but we still need them."

➤ Oakland Education Association members and the Oakland, California schools benefit from the support of their local PTA.

Local PTA leader Mae Monroe is one senior who doesn't have to be convinced that money spent on public education benefits everyone. Mother of 11, grandmother of nine, and great grandmother of five, Monroe has been an activist for children for more than 45 years. Twenty years ago, she was Oakland's Mother of the Year.

This is Monroe's 13th year as president of Oakland's PTA Council, an organization of representatives from Parent Teacher Associations throughout the district.

Monroe stays involved, she says, because persons like herself can pick up the slack for working parents who might be prevented by time constraints from advocating for their kids as much as they would like.

She advises other senior citizens, "Think back on what you received from school. Today's kids need even more. Get involved. Nothing's more important than the welfare of our children."

Richard Nowitz

Fairfax, Virginia, retired teacher John Duncan speaks frequently to retiree groups about the importance of maintaining support for schools.

➤ In Florida, members of the Pinellas Classroom Teachers Association also understand the importance of reaching out. PCTA President Doug Tuthill explains that he spends about a third of his time speaking to community groups, which, in his district, includes a large percentage of seniors.

"I don't target any one group," says Tuthill. "Rather I just talk about the relationship of education to Social Security, about maintaining our standard of living in a global economy, about the necessity of our attracting international capital, about the demographics of upcoming baby boomer retirements. I explain that investing in schools is better than investing in prisons.

"There's strong support for education in my district—a result, I think, of this effort. It's been my experience that tax initiatives for education are won or lost well before election day."

Retired Pinellas County teacher Maymie Hodges got the message long ago. She serves on the advisory council of her former elementary school and works with a community-school program to fight juvenile alcohol and drug abuse.

"Doing all we can for kids shouldn't be a desire, but a necessity," says Hodges. "Schools are the backbone of our country and the promise of our tomorrow. The need for our help is there. If we don't answer it, we've lost a generation. It's as simple as that."

—Diane Dismuke

Why Some Say No

What happens to seniors' attitudes toward public school funding when retired persons pick up stakes and move to retirement communities? A study recently conducted by a political science professor at the University of Florida shows that senior citizens in five Florida counties strongly oppose spending money for public education in their new communities.

After studying the results of school bond and tax referendums in Broward, Hernando, Indian River, Lake, and Marion Counties—areas populated primarily by retirees—Professor Jim Button found that voters 55 and older were staunchly against school bonds. Conversely, voters 18 to 54 just as strongly supported these issues.

It's important to note that, as reported in an article in the September 1993 issue of *American Demographics*, this finding is unique to the five counties in the study.

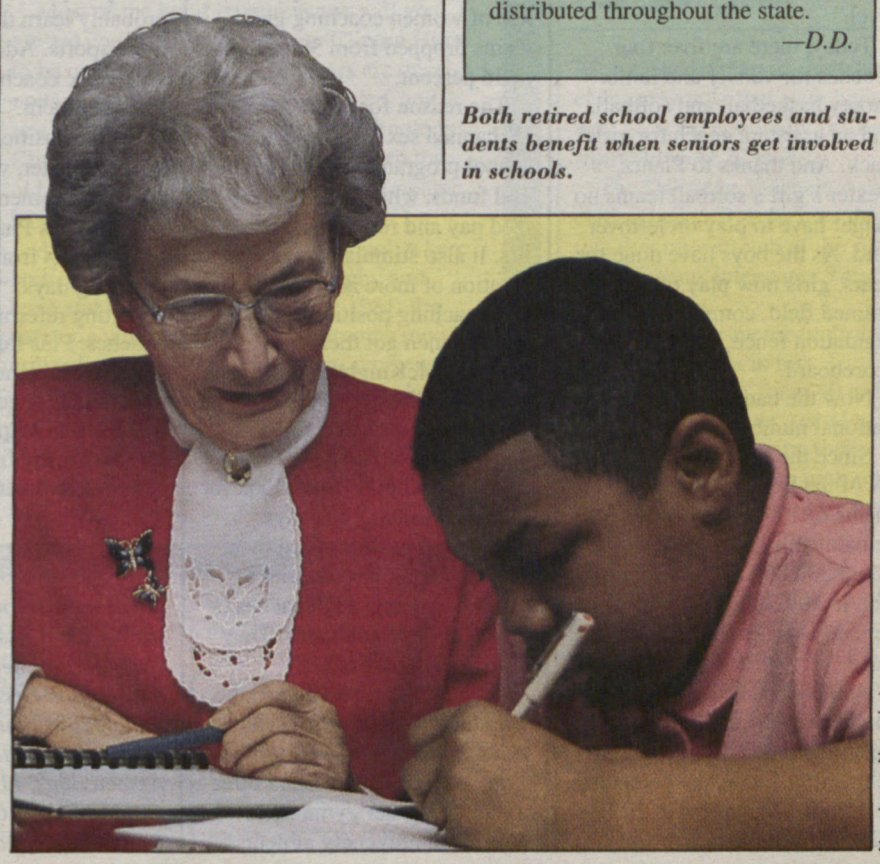
Button believes seniors may resist supporting bond issues because they no longer have the ties to the schools that they had in their home areas. Button's suggested solution? Break down age barriers.

One way is the Ellington, Connecticut approach: bring seniors into the classrooms.

But Button suggests a two-way intergenerational exchange: encourage teenagers to volunteer in retirement homes, too.

Florida Teaching Profession-NEA President Jeff Wright reports that for three years now, FTP-NEA has been working to educate the public about the inequity caused by Florida's tax system and about the need for increased education funding. FTP-NEA has produced a video as well as a booklet, widely distributed throughout the state.

—D.D.



New Jersey Newsphoto

Both retired school employees and students benefit when seniors get involved in schools.

SENIOR STATISTICS

- In 1990, there were 31.3 million persons over 65.
- Seniors represent 12 percent of U.S. population.
- Roughly 1 in 8 Americans is over 65.
- About half of President Clinton's support in the 1992 Presidential election came from voters age 65 and older.
- In 1992, about half of persons age 65 and older lived in nine states: California, Florida, New York, Pennsylvania, Texas, Illinois, Ohio, Michigan, and New Jersey.
- The educational level of the older population is increasing. Between 1970 and 1993, the percentage who had completed high school rose from 28 percent to 60 percent.
- By 2030, there will be about 70 million older persons, more than twice their number in 1990.
- Those 65 and older are projected to represent 13 percent of the population in the year 2000. That figure will rise to 20 percent by 2030.
- Older Americans spend twice as much on health today as they did before Medicare.
- Four times as many older people are supporting their children than are being supported by their children.
- About 4 million elderly persons were below the poverty level in 1992.

Sources: American Association of Retired Persons, *Los Angeles Times* poll.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Who's Coaching Girls' Sports?

Women athletes have come a long way—but not far enough. Recent statistics show a dramatic drop in the number of women coaching girls' sports.

Robert Chase

Dexter, Michigan, school athletic director Nancy Plantz (center) is a leader in recruiting women coaches. With her are girls' sports coaches Jamie Bronson (left) and Marlene Uphaus.

Although high schools report record numbers of girls' sports programs and skyrocketing numbers of girls who participate, the number of women who coach girls' teams has plummeted.

But here's the good news: there are exceptions to the national trend, exceptions like the Dexter, Michigan, school district.

When the Dexter schools hired NEA member Nancy Plantz, they got an athletic director with a genius for bringing gender equity to public school sports. One of a dwindling number of women athletic directors, Plantz is a former professional softball and field hockey player, and has coached at several universities. At Dexter she works on upgrading all sports, particularly the girls' programs.

"When I came to Dexter five years ago," says Plantz, "our situation was like that of most districts today. There was only one female coach at the high school level."

Today, there are five: four coaches for varsity and junior varsity basketball and softball, and an assistant coach for girls' track. And thanks to Plantz, Dexter's girl's softball teams no longer have to play on leftover land. As the boys have done for years, girls now play on a well-drained field, complete with regulation fence, dugouts, and a scoreboard.

Now the bad news: the national numbers aren't good.

Since the enactment of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the number of female athletes has jumped from about 300,000 in 1971 to 2 million in 1992-93. The number of female coaches hasn't kept pace.

Available state data show dramatic declines in the percentages of women who coach girls' teams. In Illinois, the percentage fell from 100 percent in 1971-72 to 39 percent in 1992-93.

The numbers in Colorado, Idaho, Minnesota, and Virginia show similar declines. Many other states show declining percentages, albeit less dramatic ones.

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFSHSA) reports that between 1984-85 (the first year for which national data are available) and 1992-93, the percentage of women coaching girls' teams dropped from 39 percent to 36 percent.

The reason for the drop? Title IX banned sex discrimination in school programs receiving federal funds, which led to equalized pay and release time benefits. It also stimulated the creation of more administrative and coaching positions.

"And men got them," says Dorothy McKnight, interim executive director of the National Association for Girls and Women in Sport.

"Many schools didn't look for women coaches," she says. "Athletic directors called their buddies in the next district to ask if they knew any coaches or recent college graduates. They didn't think past men."

Women's credentials and the structural limitations of schools encouraged this, says Susan True, NFSHSA's assistant director and a former gymnastics coach and university athletic director.

Most schools hire coaches who can teach other subjects, just as they hire English teachers who can also edit the yearbook and school newspaper.

"However, most women coaches had degrees in physical education," explains True. "If a school needed five coaches but only two physical education teachers, it hired coaches who could teach history, math, or science (generally men), but not ones who could only teach physical education (generally women)."

According to the experts, there are two ways to tackle the problem of the declining number of women coaches: create more positions and fill them with women.

"Forget the notion that Title IX means nine sports for boys and nine for girls," says True. "The percentage of girls participating does not match the percentage of girls in the student body. If you conduct an interest survey in your school, you will probably learn that girls want more sports. Add those sports—and create coaching positions. Then fill them."

Filling positions has been easy in Dexter, which has highly qualified women coaches on its faculty. Says Plantz, who still has contacts from her college coaching days: "I've been lucky at getting referrals from other coaches. Plus I don't just put an ad in the paper and hope women come to me. I go out and find them. I also help other districts by sharing my list and making referrals to other coaches."

—Mary Faber
NEA Human and Civil Rights

For more information, contact the National Association for Girls and Women in Sport, 1900 Association Drive, Reston, Virginia 22091, and the National Federation of State High School Associations, 11724 N.W. Plaza Circle, Kansas City, Missouri 64195-0626.

WASHINGTON WATCH

Former professor and NEA member **Rep. Ted Strickland** (D-Ohio) is rapidly becoming a major voice on the House Education and Labor Committee. He's been active recently in boosting Goals 2000 legislation and denouncing voucher schemes.

Best Win For Education Employees

In a victory for NEA and a broad coalition of education, labor, and civil rights organizations, the House voted 219 to 213 in late November to defeat a proposal that would have slashed federal domestic programs. The Penny-Kasich amendment would have cut $100 million from existing federal programs over the next five years—and would likely have gutted education spending.

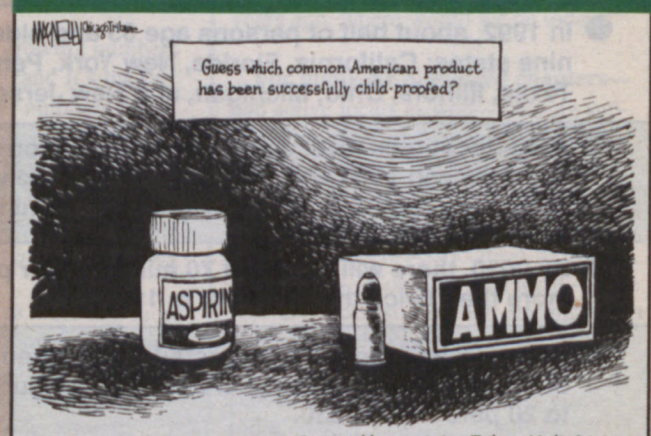
Toughest Setback

While NEA was successful in forestalling further federal budget cuts, the education funding package finally approved by Congress barely keeps up with inflation. It doesn't come close to restoring the significant erosion of federal support for education that's occurred over the last decade.

And What You Can Do

Congress begins deliberations on the federal budget for fiscal year 1995 this month. Members of Congress need to hear from their constituents that the nation must redirect its priorities and provide substantial increases for education and related programs. Address mail to the U.S. House of Representatives, Washington DC, 20515, and the U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510.

Political Cartoon of the Month



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Congressional Quote of the Month

"Federal support for schools isn't just an education issue. It's an economic and social necessity."
—Rep. Bill Clay (D-MO)

Local Look

MICHIGAN
Still Reeling

Kalkaska, the district that became a national symbol of the school financing crisis when it closed 10 weeks early last year, is facing dire times once again.

The Kalkaska public schools, already reeling from a massive cut in state aid, suffered yet another setback as voters turned down a sixth attempt to increase local property taxes.

The rural district, which covers some 400 square miles in northern Michigan, has already laid off all 24 of its bus drivers and eight of its aides, cut administration, and established pay-for-play sports. School employees lost 25 percent of their salaries last year when schools closed early.

At press time, options to cover this year's $500,000 deficit included selling the bus fleet, laying off staff, closing a school, and cutting the school year short once again.

"Now that we're down and out—no jobs, no health insurance—they're going to kick us one more time and sell our buses out from under us," says Diane Garchow, a laid-off bus driver and president of Kalkaska ESP.

"It's very frustrating," says teacher and KEA President Rik Ponstein. "And the kids in Kalkaska are getting short-changed again."

NEW YORK
Triple Strength

Baldwinsville teachers finally have a new contract—hundreds of days after the old one expired.

And they'd probably still be working without pact had they not had the support of their colleagues in the Educational Support Personnel Association and the Substitute Teacher Association.

Members of the three locals joined forces to organize protest marches and rallies, and wore their local Association shirts and colors to school twice a week.

In the end, they succeeded in building a unified front that produced a new five-year contract that resolves many long-standing disputes.

What's more, "We saw that we could rely on each other," says BESPA President Barbara Presley.

IN MISSISSIPPI

Photos by Greg Jenson

Clinton Association of Educators members active in the campaign to promote a $12.5 million school bond issue are, from left: Patricia Williams, Joel Boone, Delores White, Martha Hutson, Kathern Lucas, and Beth Garriga.

Clinton Bonds for Public Education

At Clinton High School, 1,079 students squeeze onto a campus originally built for 400. At Clinton Junior High, a mixture of water and Mississippi's yazoo clay are causing the foundation to crack.

But while some districts find even minor problems intractable, Clinton has demonstrated what a community devoted to education can accomplish.

More than 82 percent of voters approved a $12.5 million bond issue in November that will fund a new high school and provide needed improvements in existing ones.

"This community has a long tradition of supporting public education in a real big way," says Martha Hutson, president of the Clinton Association of Educators. "And on this bond issue, it's demonstrated that it will pay for excellence."

CAE members contributed heavily to the bond drive, canvassing neighborhoods, working on get-out-the-vote campaigns, and distributing posters, buttons, and T-shirts.

They joined up with Clinton's Committee for Excellence in Education—a citizens' group true to its name—to help pass the bond issue, which was also supported by city officials and the local Chamber of Commerce.

Clinton's population, now at 23,000, boomed during the '70s and '80s, as job opportunities lured people to nearby Jackson. Clinton's strong school system was one of its main attractions. But over the years the schools—especially the 32-year-old Clinton High—grew overpopulated, and remedies such as the bond issue proposal became necessary.

CAE President Martha Hutson

Most of the bond issue revenue will go toward construction of the new Clinton High, to be completed in 1995. Planners are developing a campus that can be expanded, and one that's "wired" for additional technology. Clinton Junior High School will inherit the old Clinton High campus—and its computer lab as well.

At Sumner Hill Junior High School, where Hutson has been teaching geography and state and local government since 1981, the cafeteria will be expanded, bathrooms modernized, and the electrical system renovated.

"It's gratifying and rewarding to work in a district where such a value is placed on education," says Hutson. "The people of Clinton realize it takes an entire community to educate our children."

OHIO
Buck Brigade

Celina schools recently received a dollar per student—$3,400 total—that each school can spend however it chooses.

The benefactor? The Celina Education Association.

The result? The computer laboratory at East Elementary has been upgraded. Celina High is establishing an academic achievement awards program. Other schools are developing an accelerated reader program and purchasing computer programs.

"CEA enjoys spending its money doing good in the community," says President Jerry Harris, who staffs the work-study program and is the head football coach at Celina High.

CEA is already at work on next year's projects.

COLORADO
Basic Retreat

Littleton school employees, often at the forefront of school reform, recently saw a slate of three "back-to-basics" candidates elected to the school board.

The Littleton Education Association supported four other candidates who believed the district was going in the right direction in modifying high school graduation requirements to incorporate competency assessments. An administrators' association and community group joined the endorsement.

Ironically, the "basics" group convinced some voters that the new competency requirement and other reforms were dangerous experiments with students. With nine candidates running for three seats, votes were split, and the "back-to-basics" candidates, unified in one slate, ended up winning.

UniServ Director Frank O'Hara worries that "this could have a slowing effect on education reform in Colorado," but adds that the fight's not over. More than 400 people are now attending Littleton school board meetings to debate whether reforms already in place will actually be reversed.

OREGON
Cascade Clean

Motorists driving in the Cascades may note that state highway 58 is exceptionally pristine from milepost 22 to 27.

The Oakridge Teachers Association makes it so by cleaning this five-mile stretch of the road that connects Interstates 5 and 97.

Twice a year members from the three schools in the Oakridge district, some 40 miles southeast of Eugene, spend a couple of hours tidying their adopted highway with pick-up tools and bags provided by the state highway department.

"It's been fun," says OTA President Don Hampton. "And to make the whole thing more palatable, we meet for breakfast at a local restaurant beforehand." OTA has more than enough volunteers—especially since family members pitch in too.

—Leona Hiraoka

State Side

ARIZONA
Clear Cuts

Increased class size, curriculum cuts, and supply shortages make it clear that public education across Arizona is suffering from budget cutbacks.

What's not so obvious is how funding—$227 million in the last three years, or $10,000 per classroom—was lost.

Since entering office in 1991, Governor Fife Symington has kept education budget increases far below the inflation rate. As a result, public education—51 percent of the state's budget in 1981—constitutes only 37 percent of the 1993 budget.

Last month the Arizona Education Association released the report of its statewide member survey, documenting the impact of the cuts.

Said one teacher surveyed: "When students first come into class and see that there are not enough seats or books or supplies for them, they feel like the school doesn't care for them, so why should they work hard."

LOUISIANA
Public Restoration

Students in Louisiana will get the scholarships and classroom equipment that were promised them earlier this year but left without funding.

The Louisiana legislature has approved $6 million in emergency funds to restore a trust fund for math and science equipment and two scholarship programs—one for the state's top high school graduates, the other for low- and middle-income students.

The latter is called the "Taylor Plan," after New Orleans oilman Pat Taylor, who received LAE-NEA's 1991 Friend of Education award.

When these programs failed to get funding, Governor Edwin Edwards approached the state's emergency board for the money, and even made his case on a statewide television special on education.

IOWA
Read All Over

During American Education Week, millions of Iowans opened up their morning papers to something different.

The Iowa State Education Association—working with 10 regional newspapers—sponsored an education section, with news on school funding, population demographics, and suggestions on how to get involved in local schools.

"This is the first time that an advocacy group has supplied the stories and graphics in a comprehensive, camera-ready format," says ISEA Public Relations Specialist Bill Sherman.

Response has been positive, and Sherman says the Association is likely to "blanket the state with education news" again next year.

MONTANA
Holiday Jeer

A law professor who proudly wears a "Grinch" button while lobbying has thrown the Montana state budget into turmoil—and in the end, it's cost public education $19 million.

To address its budget deficit, the state legislature originally passed a $72.7 million income tax increase early last year. But groups like "Montanans for Better Government," led by Professor Rob Natelson, gathered enough signatures to suspend the law until the 1994 general election.

So at a special holiday session the legislature cut 4.5 percent of the education budget to make up part of the loss.

The Montana Education Association is now looking at taking on other initiatives that, according to MEA lobbyist Phil Campbell, "will severely limit the ability of government to provide needed revenues."

KENTUCKY
Better Bargaining

In Kentucky, the world surrounding compensation and bargaining has just gotten a little smaller.

The Kentucky Education Association recently set up a bargaining network designed to provide local leaders and members with information on contracts, bargaining proposals, and negotiations with local school boards.

KEA member Christine Stevens, along with KEA staff, created the network. "At NEA's 1993 Bargaining Without a Law Conference," recalls Stevens, "I learned how New Mexico members networked across the state. When I described what I heard to KEA organizers, they jumped at the idea."

Today, more than 80 local Associations across Kentucky use the network.

NEW HAMPSHIRE
Checked Past

In New Hampshire, a new law requires that all public school employees undergo a criminal history record check. And a bill before the state Senate calls for the fingerprinting of public school teachers.

Neither measure applies to people working in private schools or day care centers.

"Putting the burden on public school employees is the wrong approach," says NEA-New Hampshire President Fred Place.

Teachers applying for certification or renewal have to include a notarized release that would allow the state police and FBI to check their criminal records. The record check is estimated to cost $27.

Teachers are responsible for the fee and getting their paperwork together. Depending on the school district, support staff may have to go through the background check, but they do not have to pay the fee.

The state Senate will vote on the fingerprinting law early in the '94 session.

—Leona Hiraoka

STATES STAND ON UNEQUAL FOOTING

Taxing Differences

All states depend on taxes to fund their public education system. But not all states are equal.

The list below ranks states by how much they raised per $100 of personal income in 1991 through a combination of taxes: personal income, property, sales, and others.

Property taxes are the primary source of local school revenue. New Hampshire has the highest personal property tax rate, at $6.35; Alabama has the lowest, at $1.16.

Though Alaska tops the list, almost 70 percent of its money is derived from "other" taxes (the average for the other states is about 23 percent), thanks to special revenues drawn from oil resources.

Revenue Income from Major Taxes per $100 Personal Income

	State	Total		State	Total
1.	Alaska	$21.97	26.	Massachusetts	$10.92
2.	New York	15.18	27.	Idaho	10.91
3.	Hawaii	14.22	28.	Texas	10.78
4.	Wyoming	13.94	29.	Georgia	10.75
5.	Wisconsin	12.87	30.	Ohio	10.71
6.	Minnesota	12.68	31.	Colorado	10.69
7.	Arizona	12.64	32.	Maryland	10.59
8.	New Mexico	12.48	33.	Illinois	10.58
9.	Washington	12.21	34.	South Carolina	10.52
10.	Vermont	12.05	35.	Indiana	10.46
11.	Oregon	12.05	36.	Connecticut	10.45
12.	West Virginia	11.97	37.	Nevada	10.35
13.	Maine	11.90	38.	Mississippi	10.34
14.	Louisiana	11.70	39.	North Carolina	10.33
15.	Utah	11.67	40.	Delaware	10.31
16.	Kentucky	11.63	41.	Pennsylvania	10.14
17.	Iowa	11.59	42.	Montana	10.13
18.	Michigan	11.58	43.	Virginia	10.05
19.	Nebraska	11.44	44.	Florida	10.00
20.	North Dakota	11.44	45.	South Dakota	9.69
21.	Rhode Island	11.34	46.	Arkansas	9.60
22.	California	11.24	47.	Missouri	9.27
23.	Oklahoma	11.14	48.	Alabama	9.26
24.	New Jersey	11.08	49.	New Hampshire	9.07
25.	Kansas	10.93	50.	Tennessee	9.00

Source: *State Government Finances in 1991*, U.S. Census Bureau

Meet:

Myra and David Sadker

Richard Nowitz

A Schoolgirl's Best Friends

For 20 years education reseachers Myra and David Sadker have been observing in classrooms, analyzing teacher and student behavior, looking for evidence of gender inequity—especially bias against girls.

Now in their new book, **Failing at Fairness: How America's Schools Cheat Girls** *(Scribners, $22), the Sadkers report the results of that research. The first sentence tells the story: "Sitting in the same classroom, reading the same textbook, listening to the same teacher, boys and girls receive very different educations."*

Married 28 years (they met in the Harvard Master of Arts in Teaching program), Myra and David Sadker are professors of education at American University in Washington, D.C. **NEA Today** *staff writer Nancy Needham recently talked to them on the A.U. campus about the state of schooling for girls today.*

Educators have been talking about equity for girls for 20 years. Why hasn't there been more progress?
DS: In some areas there has. Proportionately more law school and medical school students are women than 20 years ago, and the math performance of females has improved.
MS: But not the science performance. Not enrollments in engineering, physics, or computer science.
DS: People assume that interaction in the classroom should have changed by now, but why would it have?

You mean awareness only goes so far?
MS: Right. Knowing is not enough. We tell in the book about a *Dateline* episode we taped for Jane Pauley. A thoughtful, professional teacher agreed to teach a real class in front of a camera operator, a boom operator, and a technician—all looking for gender bias—and the teacher knew it.

We thought, we'll never get any biased behavior on tape, but we did. The teacher made all the classic mistakes: she had the kids divided by sex; she turned her body toward the boys more; she gave the boys more feedback when they answered questions. For the girls, she just said, "Fine."

As sensitive as we are to religious and racial bias, we are insensitive to gender bias. And it separates us into male and female cultures.

Are male teachers especially likely to say the wrong thing to girls?
MS: The inequity research shows no difference between male and female K-12 teachers. Nonetheless, anecdotally you are more likely to hear about male teachers making jokes about female incompetence.
DS: You can have 20 teachers who are OK, but one good one can turn you on—and one bad one can turn you off for life.

Schools could make science and math more female-friendly. We found that three out of four kids who come up in science class for demonstrations are boys.
MS: And if the walls could speak... You look at the boards and see male names: Peter the Great, Einstein. If there are sports pictures, they're of male teams. We know one math teacher who was concerned about this. He took his own pictures at girls basketball games and posted them.

Would you say girls have a hostile learning environment?
MS: I wouldn't go that far. The bias is more subliminal than overt. For example, when girls don't like to speak in class, we don't push them to speak. We let boys take the lead.

But we found in our research that when teachers get good training, the patterns of giving more attention to boys disappear. There's a need for good faculty development programs. Awareness—just reading this interview or reading our book—won't do it.

Does sexual harassment by boys play a role in making school unfriendly to girls?
MS: Certainly. We know a magnet school with a high number of seniors who are National Merit scholars. When the girls in that school walk by a certain place, the guys holler at them—things like "do me sexual favors."

The girls feel they are being tested. The way to pass the test, they told us, is not to complain, to brush it off and keep going.

What should the remedy be?
MS: That's not clear yet. Maybe we make a mistake, especially with younger children, to transfer terms from the workplace and label abusive behavior like this "sexual harassment."

But, on the other hand, why should I, as an adult, have at my disposal legal remedies against sexual harassment that a 16-year-old girl doesn't have? Kids—boys especially—need to know it's not open season; you can't say anything you want to.
DS: We're saying we don't know the rules yet. We have to get the vocabulary and rules set—that's a problem for educators to keep working on.

What advice would you give to teachers, support staff, and parents—what should they do?
DS: Teach girls how to do things for themselves, change tires, adjust the computer, operate the VCR.
MS: For teachers, wait time is important. If you wait three to five seconds rather than the usual one second for a student to respond to a question, you'll get more girls to answer.
DS: One teacher gave a poker chip to every student. When students answered or asked a question, they had to put their chip in a bowl. The catch was they had to spend the chip before they left that class, and they could only spend it once. The result? The quiet kids had to say one thing a day, and the noisy ones had to be selective and not say the first thing that came into their heads.
MS: Adults have to do more, intervene like this in a thoughtful and professional way. We call it *intentionality.*

What can educators do to boost the self-image of adolescent girls?
DS: We can intervene to head off the loss of self-esteem that girls begin to show in the upper elementary grades. That's when you start to see the "self putdown." When girls answer a question, they say things like, "This probably isn't what you want." That's so destructive—and it will hurt them in the workplace.

So we stop them. We say, stop, listen to yourselves. And we stop female teachers who say this in our workshops.

What can parents do?
DS: Be positive. Reward girls for nonstereotypical, i.e., academic and intellectual, activity. Fathers need to say to daughters: "That was a sharp comment you made"—not only "you look pretty."

Where do we go in 10 years?
MS: Today we're at a point of flux, of transition.
DS: But it could go in either direction. It's still hard to find a school where females have even 40 percent of the athletic budget. But that figure is as likely to go down as it is to go up.

Should resources always split 50:50?
MS: Probably not. But there's certainly no reason why the girls should always be the ones who are behind.

In this world, where both boys and girls are expected to earn their way as adults, we can't have such disparities in resources. We've made a lot of progress, but we're not there yet.

Can The Private Sector Save PUBLIC SCHOOLS?

Education Alternatives Inc. is the first private firm to run public schools. The press loves it, but educators on the front lines say the articles you've read so far don't tell the whole story.

Education Alternatives Inc., a private firm now managing nine Baltimore public schools, is getting the type of press every publicist dreams of.

"Capitalism Gets an A in Education," read a recent headline in *The Washington Post*. *The New York Times* called EAI's efforts "business' successful foray into public schools." And *Baltimore Magazine* dubbed it "a grand experiment in for-profit public education."

These, and other articles, describe how EAI, a Minneapolis-based company, took over nine decaying inner-city schools last year, cleaned them up, installed computers, revamped the curriculum, and in the process improved attendance, student learning, parental involvement, even teacher morale. School visits, said one article, left guests "impressed, even inspired."

But not everyone agrees that Education Alternatives Inc. has delivered on all of its promises or that the positive images splashed across the nation's newspapers and magazines tell the entire story about the schools' for-profit experience.

> "In Piscataway, we say for-profit public education isn't worth any price."
> —Joan Wright
> New Jersey teacher

Chris Pedota

Two Piscataway, New Jersey, teachers decided to check out for themselves some of the EAI-run schools in Baltimore before their school board was set to vote on hiring EAI in Piscataway.

Giovanna Musto and Joan Wright, president and vice-president of the Piscataway Township Education Association, were stunned.

"What I saw in one open classroom with 120 students was chaos," recalls Wright, a fifth grade teacher. "There wasn't much learning going on. As a teacher, I was totally depressed."

"At another school," Musto says, "a number of the computers in the computer lab weren't working, and the library was locked up because there wasn't a librarian. Sure the hallways were clean of trash, but these children had no p.e., no music, no art."

"When we visited one social studies planning room," says Wright, "I picked up the African-American history book, and I asked the humanities curriculum coordinator if every child had a textbook. She said no. Since the children don't have individual textbooks, the teachers plan to read the books to them."

What was upsetting to the New Jersey visitors is just as upsetting to local educators.

"We're deeply disturbed by what we've seen since EAI signed a contract to run these schools," says Baltimore City Teachers Association President John Brown, "and we believe other districts should think twice before signing away their schools."

Baltimore isn't EAI's first venture into public school operations. In 1990 the company signed a contract with Dade County, Florida, school officials to run one school, South Pointe Elementary.

South Pointe quickly became EAI's showcase program. With a new building, new IBM computers, and a new curriculum called Tesseract, the school's been widely praised as an ideal learning environment.

But, at South Pointe, EAI had extraordinary resources at hand. Besides the new building, hand-picked staff, and standard per pupil expenditure, the district and EAI promised to raise an additional $2.5 million in private donations. Money spent at South Pointe amounted to nearly $2,000 more per student than what was spent in the Dade County School District. A recent article in *The New Republic* reports that EAI lost millions on the project.

Baltimore's contractual agreement with EAI is very different. In Baltimore, EAI gets $5,500 per student, which is the average per pupil expenditure in the Baltimore schools. For the nine schools' 4,800 students, that adds up to $26.7 million a year for five years. Whatever EAI doesn't spend, it keeps.

To run its Baltimore operations, EAI has teamed up with two other private contractors, accounting firm KPMG Peat Marwick and facility management company Johnson Controls World Services.

The opportunity to make a profit, says EAI chief executive John Golle, is an incentive to keep schools running efficiently and transform them into "learning communities."

Or to cut corners.

The Baltimore Teachers Union (BTU), an American Federation of Teachers affiliate representing the teachers at the nine schools, has challenged many of the company's claims of success and even filed a lawsuit against the city alleging that EAI schools get more money than comparable elementaries in the city.

Recently, *NEA Today* spoke with a number of teachers and interns who described their own experiences at EAI-run schools. They spoke on the condition of anonymity, some of them fearful of losing their jobs.

These educators acknowledge that there have been improvements in some EAI buildings. Most buildings are cleaner, repairs are easier to make, and the halls are generally kept clean by the Johnson Controls employees.

But the teachers express deep concern that EAI laid off local custodial staff. "These were community people who lost their jobs," said one teacher.

The teachers also generally consider the Tesseract theory of learning to be educationally sound. It calls for small classes, two adults in every classroom, cooperative and active student learning, professional development for teachers, flexibility in student grouping, identification of student learning styles, and education plans developed for each student with active parent involvement.

But good theory doesn't always translate into practice. The educators who spoke with *NEA Today* had the following responses to EAI claims:

➤ EAI says its schools have two adults in every classroom. The company boasts that the nine EAI-run schools have two teachers—a "master" teacher and an "associate" teacher who holds a college degree.

In reality, experienced paraprofessionals have been transferred to non-EAI schools and interns hired in their place. The interns, hired by an agency that places temporary workers, are paid $7.50 an hour. They get no benefits.

And the EAI interns are temporary. One teacher says only a third of last year's interns remained at one of the EAI-run schools. Some left for other teaching jobs, but many, the teacher says, left because of the low pay. "It's disruptive to a class and a teacher when the

Chris Pedota

> "Will the education of children be sacrificed in the quest to make a profit?"
> —Giovanna Musto
> New Jersey local president

Craig Hartlove

Baltimore teachers John Brown and Clarice Herbert say images of computer-filled rooms and clean buildings don't tell the whole story at Baltimore's EAI-run schools.

teacher goes through two, even four interns in one year."

Beyond turnover, many staff at the EAI schools express doubts about characterizing the interns as "associate teachers."

One former intern describes the frustration of a colleague who spent an entire day cutting paper leaves for the bulletin board. Other interns were pulled to substitute, work hall duty, even security. A number of interns, whose degrees were not in education, were ill-prepared for classroom demands.

➤ EAI says class sizes have been reduced to 30 or fewer. Contrary to the reports, teachers say, the class size issue has not been resolved. At one school, teachers told *NEA Today*, there have been classes with 40, even 50 students. And students have had to share desks.

➤ EAI claims each student has a personal education plan. But some teachers say that they haven't received any training in drawing up the plans—and that many have not been completed.

➤ EAI says it's placed computers in the schools to supplement instruction. Most staff acknowledge that some computers are better than no computers, but many say the computers purchased were not a smart long-term buy. The Baltimore Teachers Union and others note that EAI bought Tandy computers that are no longer being sold to the public. In addition, the software is based on rote drills and doesn't have the type of features that would allow interactive work.

➤ EAI says its own measures show student learning has been improving. But no independent evaluation of student learning has been completed.

➤ EAI says teacher morale is better than ever. But many teachers told *NEA Today* that morale is very low at some of the schools; one teacher says it's worse than ever at one school.

Contributing to low morale: student discipline problems; student absenteeism; curriculum cuts; the loss of physical education, art, and music teachers; and poorly orchestrated mainstreaming. In other words, bad administration.

By far the biggest concern for the teachers interviewed is the mainstreaming of special education students. Training materials weren't available until November, say the teachers, and few of the regular classroom teachers were fully prepared.

The loss of the special education teachers, veteran teachers who were unwillingly transferred out of the EAI schools, meant the loss of valuable resource people. "This was truly where the children suffered the most," one teacher notes.

That's the picture New Jersey teachers Wright and Musto took back to Piscataway—to Association meetings and to parent gatherings. They brought information about all the problems at the Baltimore EAI schools.

Parents who listened to Wright and Musto were disturbed by what they heard. They gathered more parents together, and word spread quickly.

"We were alarmed at the prospect of a company, any company, not just EAI, wanting to make a profit off of our children's education," says Agantha Asamoah, a parent of three Piscataway schoolchildren. "We trust our children with the custodians, with the excellent teachers, with the system we have."

Asamoah isn't the only one who feels this way. Hundreds of parents attended coffee klatches, printed leaflets, and created posters with the slogan, "Schools are for kids, not profit."

Parents were doing their own research on EAI, Musto says. "They held meetings, they called radio stations. It was old-fashioned activism."

When the school board held a meeting last fall to discuss hiring EAI, more than 700 parents showed up.

The board's decision: to table the proposal to hire EAI indefinitely. "We believe we learned from taking a long look at Baltimore," says Joan Wright. "In Piscataway, we say for-profit public education isn't worth any price."

—Anita Merina

Before the Takeover...

If your district's thinking about hiring a private company to run your schools, you need to act quickly. Start by getting answers to these questions:

➤ Has the company run schools before? If so, what do the employees at those schools think? Was an independent evaluation done?

➤ How does the company plan to make a profit? Will savings be based on fewer services to students and reduced wages and benefits for employees?

➤ Will community control or public accountability be lost?

For more information, contact NEA's Center for the Preservation of Public Education.

OTHER PRIVATIZATION PLAYERS

EAI isn't the only company staking a claim in public schools. Here's a list of privatization's players, old and new.

Whittle Communications: When Chris Whittle's highly publicized Edison Project, designed to create a new line of private schools, failed to attract investors, Whittle revised his plan. Now the company's repackaged itself to run public schools and has been approaching public officials as a contractor.

ARA Group, Inc.: Organized in 1959 as a vending company, ARA provides or manages a variety of services, including running cafeterias, managing health care and education facilities, and distributing supplies.

Marriott Corporation: During the last 10 years, Marriott has grown to become the largest domestic provider of food service and facilities management and the biggest threat to school cafeteria workers.

Mayflower Group, Inc.: Mayflower's subsidiary, Mayflower Contract Services (MCS), headquartered in Shawnee Mission, Kansas, operates student and public transportation and bus dealerships in 20 states (Ala., Alaska, Ariz., Calif.,Colo., Ga., Ill., Idaho, Iowa, Ky., Penn., Minn., Mo., Mont., Nebr., Oreg., Tenn., Utah, Wash., and Wisc.).

ServiceMaster: Begun in 1929, ServiceMaster is one of the oldest firms providing housekeeping, maintenance, and management services. In recent years, ServiceMaster's contracts with public schools have been on the increase. These contracts cover maintenance, grounds care, housekeeping, and food management.

Public Strategies Group Inc.: When the Minneapolis, Minnesota, school board decided to hire Peter Hutchinson as school superintendent, it also retained Hutchinson's firm, Public Strategies Group, Inc.

Ryder System, Inc.: Known more for its vehicle leasing services, Ryder also offers school transportation services. More than 25 percent of new contracts in the company's student and public transportation unit consist of conversions from school-operated transportation systems.

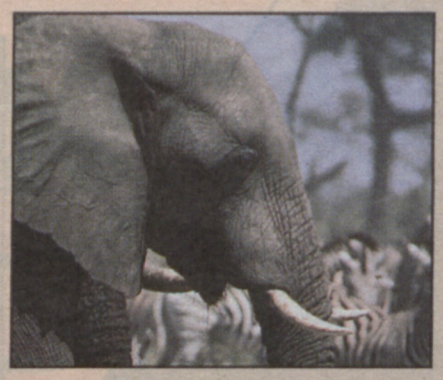
For more information and tips on combatting privatization in your area, contact the NEA Center for the Preservation of Public Education, 1201 16th St. N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

RESOURCES

TV Tips

Reflections on Elephants—*PBS, Wednesday, February 9, 8-9 p.m.* This program takes an unprecedented look at African elephant behavior and at communication within the African elephant society (photo right).

For a study guide, contact your local PBS affiliate.



Smithsonian Expedition: Treetop Cannibals of New Guinea—*Arts & Entertainment, Sunday, February 13, 8-9 p.m. ET.* This documentary explores the recently discovered Korowai tribe of New Guinea, providing a rare glimpse into the prehistoric past.

Against the Odds: The Artists of the Harlem Renaissance—*PBS, Wednesday, February 16, 10-11 p.m. ET.* This program examines the experience of Black visual artists working in the late 1920s and '30s (photo below).

In Black and White: Toni Morrison—*The Discovery Channel, Thursday, February 17, 9-10 a.m. ET.* This Assignment Discovery program profiles the eloquent author and Nobel laureate.

When the Animals Talked: African-American Storytelling—*The Discovery Channel, Thursday, February 24, 9-10 a.m. ET.* This program looks at folktales as protests against slavery.

Summit '94: Violence in America—*TBS, Saturday, February 26, 9:50-10:50 p.m. ET.* This Black History Month special features a roundtable discussion on violence in America, and the rise of violent acts by and against young people.

Kids on Kids on Kids—*HBO, check local listings for dates and times.* This special features children's reflections on themselves and the world around them.

National Student Town Meeting: Violence and Crime—*C-SPAN, check local listings for dates and times.* In this joint venture between C-SPAN, the Close-Up Foundation, and Scholastic, Inc., young Americans speak out about social issues that affect their lives.

The Tomorrow People—*Nickelodeon, Saturdays, 6-7 p.m., Sundays, 1-2 p.m.* This series features a group of kids with extraordinary telepathic powers.

Teacher TV

Don't forget to tune into *Teacher TV*, the weekly magazine-style program coproduced by NEA and The Learning Channel. *Teacher TV* airs Sunday evenings, 6-6:30 p.m. ET. Here's a list of upcoming episodes:

February 13: When Society's Problems Walk Through the Door
February 20: Higher-Order Thinking Skills
February 27: Health and Well-Being
March 6: Restructured Schools: A Thorough Look
March 13: Sexual Harassment and Schools

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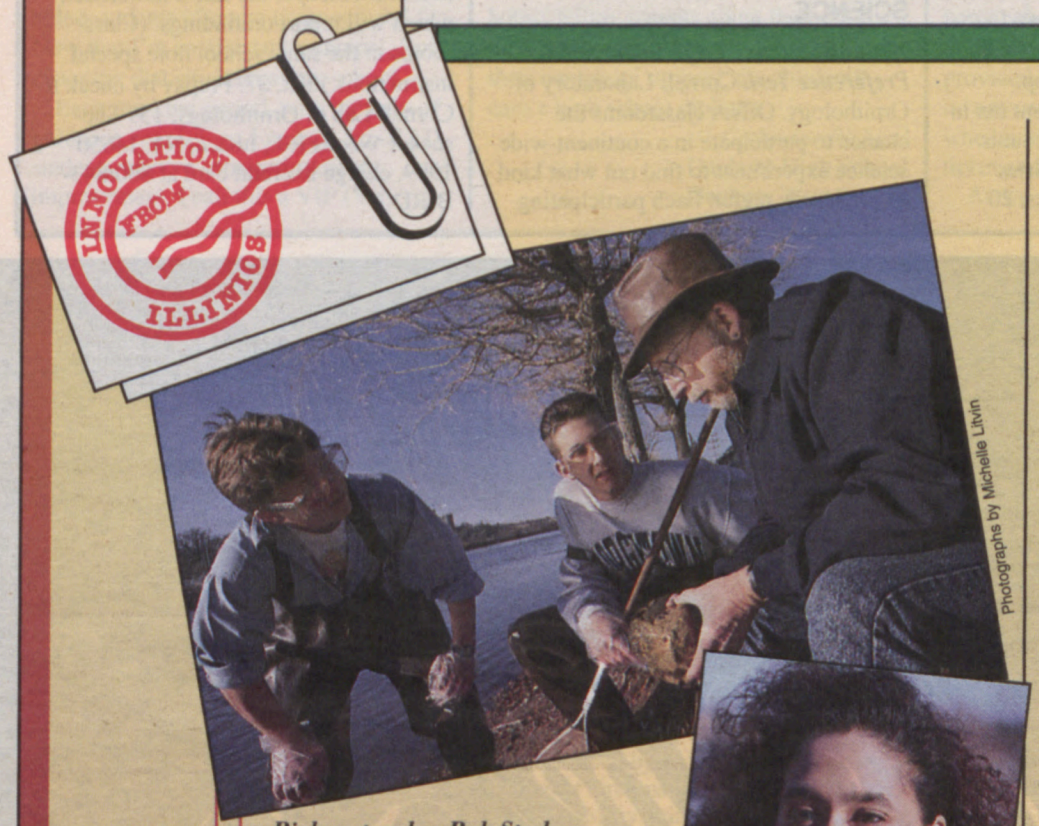
Innovation

How NEA members are changing the way schools work



Photographs by Michelle Litvin

Biology teacher Bob Sterken and students Joe Raper (left) and Jeff Zahorak.

In the great river gambling debate, student Nabeela Gulfam is assigned to the "no" side.

A River Runs Through It

"It" being the science, social studies, and literature curriculum now used by students in 300 schools in 22 states. A look at how one Illinois school is using a popular new program to create interdisciplinary learning.

The river as integrating theme of school study has proven irresistible to teachers in more than 300 high schools, mostly in the Mississippi River watershed, since the Rivers Project began at eight schools in Illinois in 1990.

Schools are latching on to river study because it's good for showing interrelationships: you can come at a river from a lot of different directions.

"You start with English, add social studies and science, and you have a model for curriculum integration," explains Robert Williams, founder and director of the Rivers Project at Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville (SIUE).

"But the river is the key," Williams continues. "It's not easy to integrate curriculum unless you have a common topic."

Last year at Streamwood High School in the Elgin school district in Illinois, Janet Lueck and two colleagues—Ray Denning in social studies and Bob Sterken in science—designated themselves a Rivers Project team. Their students are from one of Lueck's sophomore English classes.

Rivers projects are often based in English as opposed to science classes because Bob Williams is a long-time fan of the Foxfire approach. He believes that storytelling is the key activity for getting things done for the environment. "Change happens because somebody on the team has writing skills and can run a campaign for new sewers or septic tanks," Williams says, "and science is a natural for storytelling."

So far this school year, Streamwood's Rivers Project students have had two days on the banks of Elgin's Fox River, a tributary of the Illinois River, which is a tributary of the Mississippi.

"The first time, in October, the kids were spread out for two miles along the bank." says Lueck. "Each faculty member had a station on the river where we assigned activities.

"For English, I asked them to write figurative language—to take on the river as a persona, and write poems about what the river would tell us if it could speak. Or to pretend they were a Jesuit explorer or Native American, and tell what they would have seen on the river 300 years ago."

For social studies, the students mapped two-mile segments of the river. For science, they took water quality measurements, uniform across all Rivers Curriculum projects, for such variables as fecal coliform bacteria, pH, and dissolved oxygen.

The water quality readings go to SIUE via SOILED NET, a computer network, and then on to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Student Jeff Zahorak was looking for life forms during the first visit. "I had waders on," he recalls, "and I was scooping up sediment from the river bottom to see if it contained any life. I didn't find anything, but others did."

The students also set a trap for the fast-growing, river-choking zebra mussel.

"Since the great floods last summer," Lueck explains, "zebra mussels have moved from the Mississippi to its tributaries. When we went back in December, we found the trap had been swept away, but we know from other sources that zebra mussels have reached the Fox."

The surprise environmental problem for Streamwood's Rivers Project has turned out to be riverboat gambling. The state of Illinois awarded the tenth and last of its authorized gambling boats to the city of Elgin.

Lueck's English class is researching the pros and cons of riverboat gambling. Jeff Zahorak, on the pro side's economic impact team, points to the positive effects on employment of the proposed two-story vessel. "We predict 2,000 new jobs including 20 new police officers," Zahorak says.

But Nabeela Gulfam, on the con side, points out the risk: "The city is spending a lot—the cost of dredging the river, for example. If these new jobs don't materialize, that's money down the drain."

"The program has facilitated students' decision-making skills," Janet Lueck says, "and it has also let them see real-life issues integrated into academic areas."

The Rivers Project has a three-year National Science Foundation grant to produce integrated curriculum materials applicable to any river.

Student writings—poems such as Lueck assigned, letters to government officials, interviews with older people who once worked on the river, and material describing the rivers' ecological problems—also move electronically to SIUE where they're published in an annual print edition as *Meanderings.* The entire *Meanderings 94* issue will be devoted to the impact of the flood of '93.

If you'd like to participate in the Rivers Project or find out when the curriculum is ready (target date is fall 1994), you can reach headquarters at SIUE from NEA Online or another avenue to Internet at Rivers@eville.uiuc.fred.org. The phone is 618/692-3788; FAX 618/692-3595.

—Nancy R. Needham

From Higher Ground

The flood of '93 put one of the eight original Rivers Projects—the one at Valmeyer (Illinois) High School—out of commission. Valmeyer was overrun by the Mississippi River, and the townspeople decided not to rebuild.

For now Valmeyer High School exists in modular buildings parked in a fairgrounds 10 miles from the original town. Plans are to rebuild the town on a bluff 1.5 miles inland from its original low-lying site.

"The problem for the Rivers Project here is not too much water, but no laboratory in which to analyze it. You can't really do water sampling without a lab," says science teacher Jim Galeski. "Also, the school's $1,500 microbalance, used to measure dissolved solids, got lost in storage."

—N.R.N.

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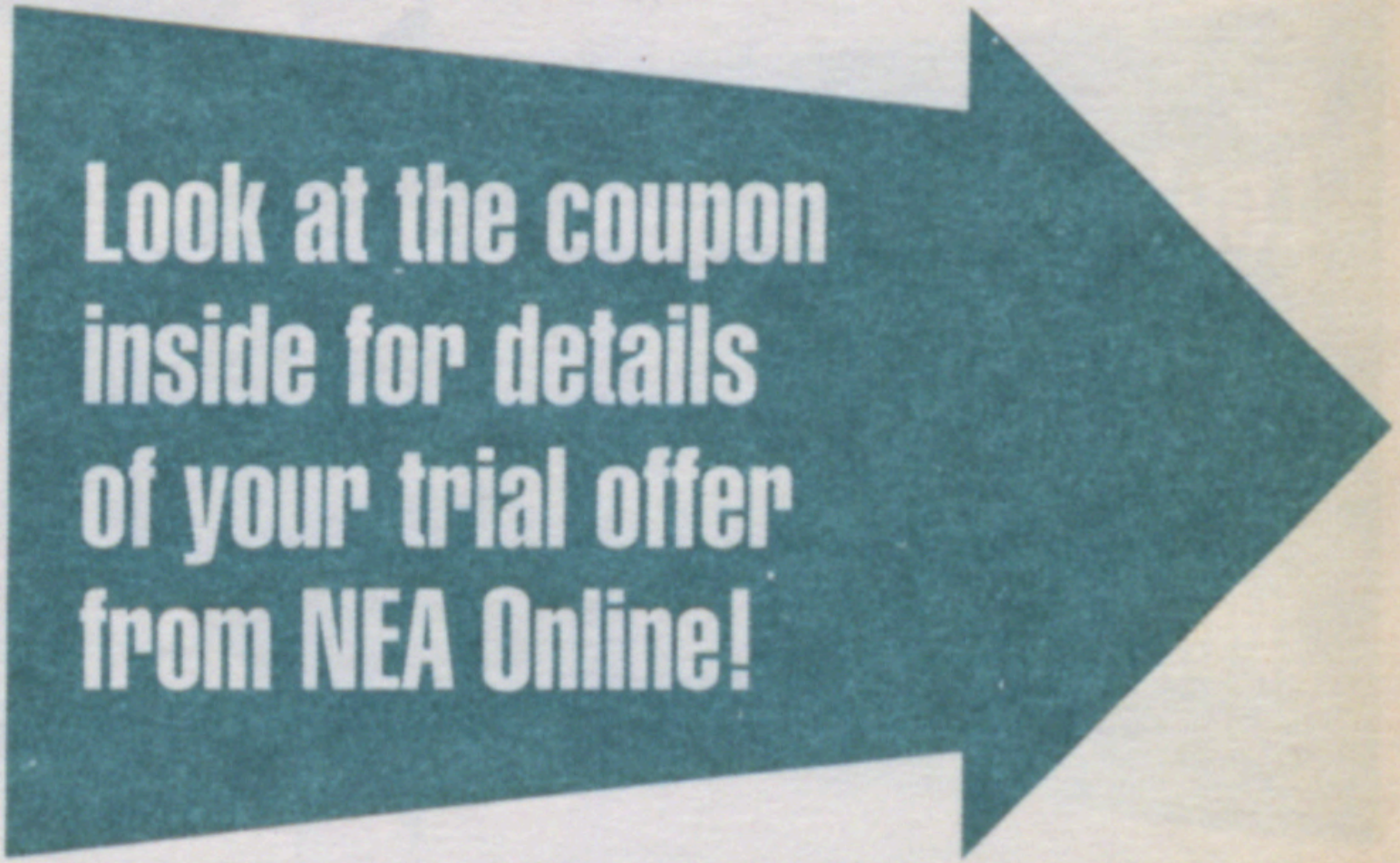
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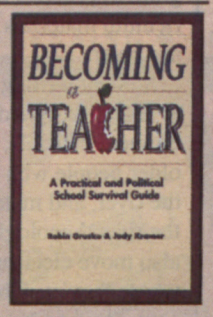
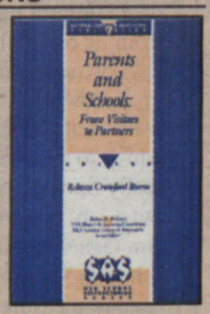


Becoming a Teacher: A Practical and Political School Survival Guide. Robin Grusko and Judy Kramer. Aimed especially at student- and first-year teachers, this guide tells how to deal with practical matters such as grading, record-keeping, and joining the union. 142 pp. $14.95 plus $3 p&h (add 5 percent tax in IN). Prepay to ERIC/EDINFO Press, Indiana University, P.O. Box 5953, Bloomington, IN 47407, or charge to credit card at 800/925-7853, FAX 812/331-2776.

Careers in Teaching Handbook. David Haselkorn and Andrew Calkins/Recruiting New Teachers, Inc., Belmont, Mass. Aimed at undergraduates and career changers who want to become certified to teach. Gives comparative data (on salaries and supply and demand, for instance), describes types of training programs, and gives information on minority recruitment programs. 122 pp. For a free single copy, call RNT at 800/45-TEACH.

PARENT RELATIONS



Parents and Schools: From Visitors to Partners. Rebecca Crawford Burns, editor. Recounts the experiences of educators and parents who have put research into practice to improve children's learning. 104 pp. Special NEA member discount price: $9.56, until March 15, 1994. (Regular price: $11.95) Stock no. 1856-7-10-FF. NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516, 800/229-4200.

LITERATURE

The Black Experience in Books for Children and Young Adults. Ersye Kirk. Gives brief annotations for more than 700 books categorized by genre and grade level, and lists Coretta Scott King Awards and Honor Books. 112 pp. $14.95 plus $2 p&h (add 7 percent tax in OK) prepaid. The following discounts are available to schools and libraries using purchase orders: 2-4 copies, 20 percent; 5-99, 40 percent; 100 or more, 50 percent. Positive Impact, P.O. Box 1764, Ardmore, OK 73402.

SCIENCE

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The Harold W. McGraw, Jr. Prize in Education

IDEA EXCHANGE

Improvement Matters

Having been a learning disabilities teacher for 19 years, I'm acutely aware that the academic efforts of learning disabled students often go unrecognized. Now that I'm an assistant principal, I'm changing that situation at my school.

Each marking period, with the help of guidance counselors, I make a list of LD students who've shown significant improvement. I call this a VIP (Very Improved Performance) list. I display the list prominently on our bulletin board; people often stop to read it and congratulate the students named.

I also send a letter to each child's home, telling parents about their child's efforts and expressing the hope that, with their continued support, the child will earn a high school diploma.

Catherine Richard
Danbury High School
Danbury, Connecticut

Talking to the Driver

To stimulate communication between my driver education students and their parents, I ask each student to interview one parent about driving.

The students can ask any questions, provided they require more than a yes or no answer. For example, they might ask whether the parent ever got a speeding ticket and, if so, what happened.

As we go over the interviews in class, it's interesting to compare parent responses.

My students enjoy this project, but the real benefit is that it initiates dialogue between these 16-year-olds just getting licenses and their parents.

Roger Stevens
Three Lakes High School
Three Lakes, Wisconsin

Meaningful Music

Singing, dancing, movement, and preschool children naturally go together. To make music as meaningful as possible for my early childhood education students, I suggest the following:

➤ Introduce a new song by its title and then repeat each word clearly.

➤ Talk about the words in the song. Ask the youngsters to repeat and define the words so they can more fully understand the meaning of the song.

➤ Show pictures or objects that will further clarify the meaning of those words. If you're singing, for example, "Happy and You Know It," use pictures of happy faces, sad faces, angry faces. Give the children mirrors and let them practice making those faces, discussing accompanying feelings.

➤ Sing the song by yourself while the children listen carefully. Invite the children to join in when they're ready.

➤ Finally, add actions, musical instruments, and props.

Nancy S. Kaczrowski
Adrian, Ellsworth, Magnolia, and Luverne School Districts, Minnesota

Harvesting Ecological Understanding

To help students better understand environmental issues, I constructed a series of raised gardens on what was formerly 1.5 weedy acres behind our school for them to work in. With donated railroad ties from a nearby railroad, compost, and seed corn for planting, we got underway.

In the spring, summer, and fall, about 50 of my science students helped to plant, maintain, and harvest vegetables from these gardens. In all, about 300 students participated in lessons related to the garden and the environment.

Our sweet corn crop produced enough corn to feed the entire school population—more than 500 kids—for lunch one day. The 700 pounds of potatoes and 150 pounds of onions harvested were donated to an area food shelf.

The garden theme carries over into other academic areas. For instance, one math class worked out the return on 32 pounds of seed potatoes.

David Praschak
St. Croix Central Elementary School
Roberts, Wisconsin

Three who make a difference: Announcing the 1993 winners of the McGraw Prize in Education.

The Harold W. McGraw, Jr. prize was established in 1988, in celebration of McGraw-Hill's 100th anniversary and in honor of our chairman emeritus.

Each year, up to three $25,000 prizes are awarded to people who have made a difference in education.

For 1993, the Board of Judges selected these three individuals for distinguished contributions to the advancement of education.

Sister Mary Brian Costello, R.S.M.

As Superintendent of Schools for the Archdiocese of Chicago, the largest private school system in the world, Sister Mary Brian Costello, R.S.M., gained national attention as a powerful voice for inner-city education.

Her concern for economically disadvantaged children led Sister Mary Brian to establish summer learning centers in the heart of the city's poorest areas to provide them with special educational opportunities. She also helped develop innovative learning programs for preschoolers as well as for exceptional children and those learning-disabled or handicapped by economic condition or circumstance.

Sister Mary Brian is currently serving as Chief of Staff for the Archdiocese, where, in keeping with her life-long commitment to education, she has provided leadership for Big Shoulders, the Archdiocese's ambitious program to assist and strengthen parochial schools of the inner city.

Sharon Darling

Adult illiteracy cripples many efforts to educate disadvantaged youngsters, fueling a seemingly endless cycle of undereducation, unemployment and poverty.

With a lifetime of work in the field of literacy, Sharon Darling developed a model that breaks the intergenerational grasp of illiteracy and poverty by bringing undereducated parents and children to school to learn together. Her imaginative approach has given thousands of families new confidence, hope and self-esteem.

To assist educators and policymakers in developing and funding family literacy efforts, Ms. Darling established the National Center for Family Literacy in Louisville, Kentucky. The Center has successfully spread her innovative ideas throughout the country, providing opportunities for parents to improve their own lives as well as the lives of their children.

Booth Gardner

Education is at the very center of Booth Gardner's agenda. As Governor of the State of Washington for eight years, he successfully introduced reforms which improved education throughout the state.

Stemming from his belief that all children can and should learn at higher levels, Governor Gardner helped develop an innovative system of results-based education programs that significantly raised academic achievement standards for all students, lowered dropout rates, provided greater flexibility for students to learn, elevated standards for educators and fully funded early childhood education.

At the national level, Governor Gardner shares his devotion to education reform with leaders from across the country, through the programs he developed in his home state and as former chairman of both the National Governors Association and the Education Commission of the States.

For more information, write to The Harold W. McGraw, Jr. Prize in Education, McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020.

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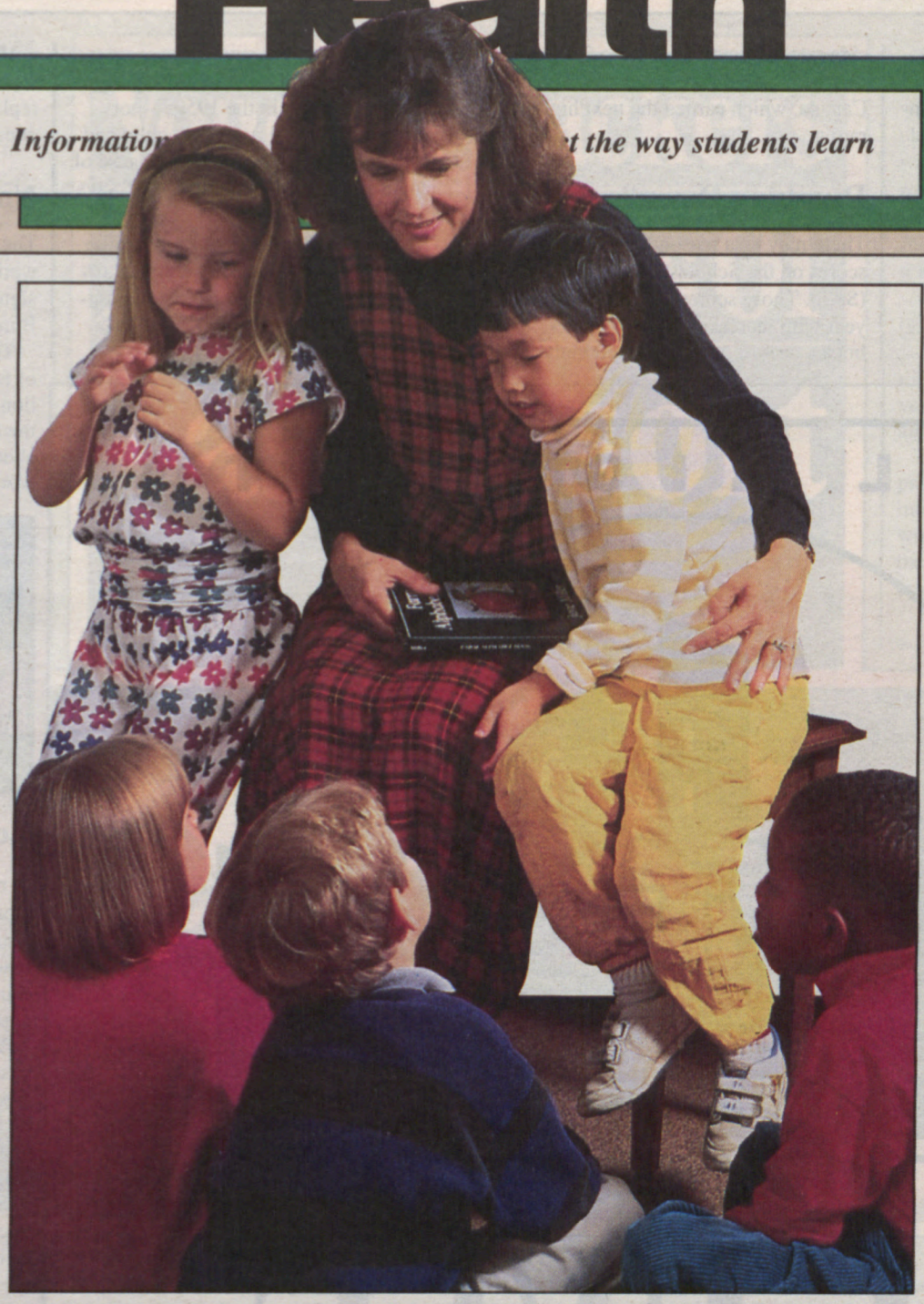
Health

Dr. Esther Wender is director of child health services at the Westchester County (New York) Department of Health. A clinical professor of pediatrics at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Wender has specialized in childhood attention deficit disorders for the past 25 years. NEA Today assistant editor Stefanie Weiss interviewed Dr. Wender about these disorders.

Information ... the way students learn



Attention Deficits:

What We Know Now

Why are so many more children being diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) than used to be, even five years ago?
Because we—physicians and particularly pediatricians—are more aware of these disorders. And because more parents and educators are aware of the disorders. We're more aware of how they affect children and how they hamper children's success in school. In the past, children with these disorders were just allowed to fall through the cracks, drop out of school, take menial jobs.

How many children have ADHD?
About 4 percent of school-age children—that would be a conservative estimate.

As many as 2 million children are taking medication to control ADHD. Does that concern you?
No. A lot more children are being treated than used to be, but that's entirely appropriate. Medication is one treatment that seems to make a difference for a lot of these children.

What does concern me is that some people are diagnosing ADHD without adequate information and are not appropriately managing and following the use of the medication.

How should medication be managed?
First of all, the doctor and parents need to be sure the drug is effective, that the dosage is right, and that side effects are minimized. Then, children on medication should be seen every four months. As children get older, the dosages need to be adjusted, and decisions need to be made. It's improper for a child to be put on medication and told, "call back when you feel like it."

What are the symptoms of ADHD?
A child with ADHD will display a pattern of behavior over a long period of time, at least six months, usually much longer.

Although there's a lot of variability within the syndrome, children with ADHD tend to be overactive and impulsive, talk excessively, display behavior that's not goal directed, have short attention spans, touch or grab objects or people, and have difficulty sustaining effort.

So often these children are described as lazy, but that's simply not the case. These children have a real problem. They're not just bad kids. Blaming the parents and the family is very easy to do, but that's not usually the reason for the child's problems.

What's causing the problem?
There's no conclusive evidence yet, but one thing we do know is that there are multiple causes for the disorder. One of the primary causes is likely genetic. Children with ADHD tend to have a developmental imbalance of certain chemicals—neurotransmitters—in the brain.

Beyond genetics, there is an association between ADHD and certain neurological conditions, including severe prematurity, lead poisoning, and fetal alcohol syndrome. It's important to remember that the vast majority of children with these neurological conditions don't have ADHD. And these conditions likely account for only a very small fraction of children with attention deficit problems.

How do drugs treat the chemical imbalance in the brain?
Certain drugs that stimulate the central nervous system—like Ritalin—increase the amount of certain chemicals associated with ADHD in the brain.

At what age can ADHD be identified?
The vast majority of children with ADHD are diagnosed between the ages of 6 and 8, but the disorder starts much earlier, between the ages of 2 and 4. It tends to get picked up when children start first grade and encounter more structured demands from the school environment.

What can school employees do to make it easier for children with ADHD to succeed?
To help children with ADHD sustain attention and effort and, therefore, complete work, school employees need to use more sophisticated and intense motivation techniques. These children need frequent feedback and inducement to refocus attention. That means a much smaller teacher-to-student ratio. Physical punishment won't help—but strategies that force children to deal with the consequences of their behavior might.

Since children with ADHD have a lot of energy, it may be helpful to give them outlets for that energy, such as playground activities and running. On the other hand, it's in such activities that these children often get into trouble with aggressive and annoying behavior toward others. They need proper playground supervision.

How should school personnel administer medication?
School employees should follow usual medical guidelines. They should have a written order from the doctor, written permission from the parents, time and dosage information, and an appropriately labeled bottle.

Do children outgrow ADHD?
By and large, no. Maybe 20 percent fully outgrow it. A significant portion adjust reasonably well. It's a matter of growing up, knowing what behaviors you have problems with, and learning strategies to compensate. Many people do it very well.

That's the good news. The bad news is that we think that this disorder leads to some significant problems in adolescence and later adulthood. Of the 80 percent who don't outgrow ADHD, about half will significantly underachieve.

Rumors aside, is there really a Ritalin shortage?
Yes, at the end of 1993, there was a shortage. The quota set by the government for production of the drug [Ritalin is a stimulant and a controlled substance] didn't keep up with the demand. I'm told the shortage is over now, but it may take a little while for companies to gear back up and for the drugs to be distributed to communities.

TRENDS

America the Dangerous

The United States is one of the most dangerous places in the industrialized world for young people, according to *The Progress of Nations,* a recent report by the United Nation's Children's Fund. The facts are dismal: nine out of 10 youngsters murdered in industrialized nations are killed in America.

The report's statistics put the United States in a league of its own. The homicide rate for youth ages 15 to 24, for instance, is five times higher here than in Canada, which earned the next highest rating.

Dumbing Down?

There may be a reason for declining scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). Those scores correlate year by year with increasingly simplified schoolbooks, according to a Cornell University sociologist.

"The major simplification of American schoolbooks came in the 1950s—not because the average American child had suddenly become dumber, but because of changes in educational philosophy," says Donald Hayes, Cornell sociologist.

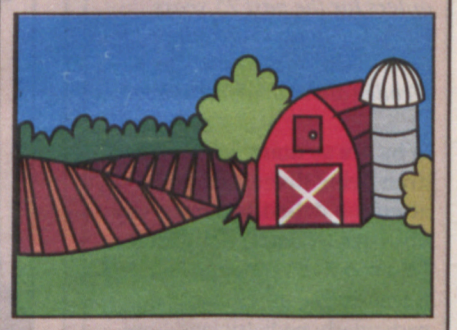
SAT-verbal scores began to fall in the early 1960s (exactly when the first Baby Boomers began taking the tests), continued to drop for 16 years, and have remained low ever since.

Hayes' conclusion: "Textbooks are replaced all the time, and we should replace them with more challenging ones."

Not Home on the Range

The number of Americans who live on working farms is no longer statistically significant, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

The 1991 Census revealed the number of farm residents had declined to 4.6 million in 1991, or just under 2 percent of the total population. In the early 1900s, about 35 percent of Americans lived on working farms.



Zest for the Zany

In recent years, it seems as though principals everywhere have come up with gimmicks to entice kids to read. If kids read 10,000 books or a million pages, principals have been known to promise anything.

You know the ones: the principal who sits at a desk on the school's roof for a day, the principal who agrees to shave his head, or the one in Missouri who donned a swim suit and sat in a neck-high bowl full of jello for an entire day.

So far, we've seen little media coverage about principals who read, the better to inspire kids to do the same.

Online Odysseys

Students are roaming the world with modems and computers. Those with access to the right equipment can tap into information that comes in handy when it's term paper time.

But when does downloading equate with plagiarism? Who owns the online materials? And how should students acknowledge their sources?

One proposal to deal with these and other concerns is a set of rights and responsibilities for electronic network users put out by EDUCOM, an interest group for college and university computer services users.

There's nothing fancy about EDUCOM's suggestions. For example, the list starts by stating simply that each person should recognize and honor the intellectual property of others. Plus, the suggested code deals with the rights and responsibilities of educational institutions.

To get the complete text of EDUCOM's bill of rights and responsibilities, call EDUCOM offices at 202/872-4200 or read it on NEA Online in the Help and Information Resource Library. For more information about NEA Online, see page 28.

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LEGAL TIMES

Voucher Backers Are In Courts Of Last Resort

Rebuffed by state legislatures and beaten at the polls, voucher proponents have taken their crusade to a new battlefield: the courts. Happily, they haven't succeeded there either...at least not yet.

Clint Bolick is a man with a mission, a rebel with a cause. If the former Reagan Justice Department lawyer has his way, state courts around the country will start issuing taxpayer-funded vouchers that parents can use to send their kids to private and religious schools.

Bolick is the vice-president and litigation director for the Washington-based Institute For Justice, a nonprofit "public interest" law firm. In June 1992, he filed suit in Chicago on behalf of some 30 parents and 70 schoolchildren seeking to create a court-ordered voucher system.

His legal theory is actually quite simple: the education clause of the Illinois state constitution guarantees the right to an "efficient" and "high quality" public education. The lawsuit charges that Chicago's public schools are so grossly inadequate that they violate this constitutional right.

But what makes this case so revolutionary is the remedy that the plaintiffs seek. They've asked the court to order the state to give them vouchers to pay tuition at any private or sectarian school of their choice. Each voucher would be worth an amount equal to the state funding per pupil that now goes to each local school district, an estimated $2,100 to $2,900 a year.

Last March, Cook County Judge Aaron Jaffe dismissed the case, saying that the plaintiffs had provided no basis for alleging a constitutional violation.

While acknowledging that the Chicago school system had received more than its share of bad publicity, Jaffe ruled that the question of how best to remedy the problems "is essentially a political question that should be decided in the public arena.

"Courts should not attempt to decide questions that rightfully belong to the legislature," he added.

Bolick has appealed the case, charging: "This decision means that, no matter how bad the public schools become, the educational bureaucracy has no accountability whatsoever, and the children have no recourse." He also spurned the judge's suggestion that he take his complaint to the Illinois state legislature, claiming that it is "controlled by special interests" who oppose vouchers.

The same week he filed the Chicago case, Bolick initiated a similar lawsuit in Los Angeles on behalf of 34 children and parents. Although the legal theory is a little different, the remedy sought—court-ordered vouchers—is the same.

In a 1971 case challenging the great disparity in spending between rich and poor school districts, the California Supreme Court ruled that education is a "fundamental right" under the state constitution.

Relying on that decision, the plaintiffs in the L.A. case claim that the city's schools are in such bad shape that the students who are enrolled there have been unconstitutionally deprived of their fundamental right to an education.

Last June, Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Raymond Cardenas threw the case out of court, ruling that the plaintiffs were not specific enough about what local and state school officials had done wrong. The judge added that he could not provide plaintiffs with the voucher remedy they wanted because the California constitution prohibits the expenditure of state money on private schools.

Allan Keown, deputy general counsel for the California Department of Education, said that the case was "extremely flimsy from the start," and called the judge's ruling "a major victory for supporters of public education in California." The plaintiffs have appealed.

Clint Bolick isn't the only crusading voucher proponent these days; lawyers in Wisconsin and Georgia have also entered the fray. In Milwaukee, Mark Bredemeier, an attorney with the Landmark Legal Foundation, filed a lawsuit last September seeking a court order requiring the state to give parents vouchers to send their kids to religious schools.

As has been widely reported, the Wisconsin legislature in 1990 enacted a program to allow up to 1,500 students from low-income families in Milwaukee to receive state-funded vouchers to attend private nonsectarian schools.

The four parents and their children who are plaintiffs in the case claim that the Milwaukee program's prohibition on the use of the vouchers in religious schools violates their First Amendment right to the free exercise of religion.

In an ironic twist, State Representative Polly Williams, the sponsor of the original Milwaukee plan, joined Bredemeier at a press conference announcing the lawsuit challenging the plan. When asked by a reporter about the chances of winning the case, Bredemeier challenged opponents of the lawsuit to "bet their house" on the outcome.

And in Georgia, Atlanta attorney Glenn Delk last summer uncovered a 1961 state statute that provides for "education grants" to be paid to any child between the ages of 6 and 19 for the purpose of attending a nonsectarian private school.

According to media reports, the law was passed in the wake of *Brown v. Board of Education* and was intended to circumvent federal court orders to desegregate the states' public schools, but it was never funded.

Last September, Georgia Attorney General Michael Bowers issued an unofficial opinion that, because of a change in the state school funding mechanism, the voucher statute is no longer "operative" and is unenforceable.

He added that, since the law was passed with racially "discriminatory intent," any effort to use the statute would likely be challenged in court on the ground that it violates "current federal laws."

Undaunted by the law's racist origin or the Attorney General's opinion, Delk submitted some 10,000 voucher applications to the Georgia Lieutenant Governor in October. "We intend to press forward," Delk said, adding that the fight will take place either in court or on the floor of the legislature.

The battle over tax-funded vouchers is now being fought on three fronts: at the ballot box, in state legislatures, and in state court. To date, the supporters of public education are winning the war. NEA's Center for the Preservation of Public Education (CPPE) reports that the recent vote in California marked the 19th time in 20 ballot initiatives since 1966 that voters rejected proposals to funnel tax dollars to private schools.

On the legislative front, only Wisconsin (with the limited Milwaukee plan) and Puerto Rico have passed voucher programs, despite proposals in dozens of state legislatures. (The latter program currently is being challenged in court by NEA's Puerto Rico affiliate, Asociacion de Maestros de Puerto Rico.) NEA foresees substantial voucher efforts in 20 states in 1994.

But the recent spate of voucher lawsuits filed by right-wing, "public interest" law centers represents a new strategy in what will undoubtedly be a long, hard struggle.

The NEA Office of General Counsel will continue to monitor this litigation, and NEA will become involved when appropriate. CPPE—created by NEA last year to centralize the fight against voucher proposals nationwide—will continue to monitor developments in the states, formulate strategies, provide technical assistance to NEA affiliates, and serve as a clearinghouse for information.

NEA members who are confronted with voucher initiatives in their own states or who simply want more information about the national voucher movement, are encouraged to contact the Center for the Preservation of Public Education at NEA Center.

—Michael D. Simpson
NEA Office of General Counsel

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PERSONALLY SPEAKING

YOU CAN BEAT THE CREDIT CARD CRUNCH

Most credit cards users are piling up debt and paying high interest charges— for no good reason.

Have you noticed? Interest rates on credit card balances are moving down, from an average of 18.5 percent in 1992 to 17.3 percent in 1993. And there's a huge range of rates available—from 7 or 8 percent to more than 23 percent. But if you're the typical consumer, experts say you're not taking advantage of the new, lower rates.

"When someone writes to us listing the interest rates on their credit cards, it's much more common to see five cards with rates above 18 percent than to see any cards with rates below 18 percent," says Gerri Detweiler, executive director of BankCard Holders of America, a consumer group based in Virginia.

That's frustrating to Detweiler, whose group has been lobbying for lower interest rates.

Consumer response to a new service offered by BankCard Holders shows just how slowly consumers are taking advantage of lower interest rates.

Last June, the consumer group introduced what it calls its "Debt Zapper" program. For a fee of $10, (send a check to 560 Herndon Pkwy., Suite 120, Herndon, VA 22070), BankCard Holders will do a customized report showing consumers how to pay off their debt most efficiently.

Those who pay the fee get a form on which to list their credit cards, interest rates, and the balance on each card. They are asked to indicate how much, if any, money they can afford to pay each month over and above the minimum balance.

BankCard Holders uses a computer program to calculate how consumers should best allocate their money, paying down the highest rate cards first. About 2,500 reports were completed in the first three months of the program.

The results were eye-opening.

"What I'm seeing is very discouraging," Detweiler says. "Very few people have cards with rates below 18 percent. We've seen MasterCards at 23.5 percent. Department store cards start at 18 percent and go up. It's typical to see cards with 21 or 22 percent interest rates."

Balances are much higher than she expected, too. "At first, I was surprised to see that people carried $20,000 balances on credit cards," Detweiler recalls. "Pretty soon, I saw that was common." The average credit card balance of consumers who have used the program is about $14,000.

"Now I don't get surprised until I see $50,000," says Detweiler. "One woman had $89,000 in credit card debt. Two of her cards had rates of 20 percent, one was 19.8 percent, one 21 percent, and one 15.9 percent."

Even those consumers who have one lower rate card usually do not make use of it to transfer balances from their higher rate cards, she added.

Detweiler speculates that many Americans don't consider saving money on credit card interest to be a high priority.

"If you went into the bank for a car loan and you were offered one for 21 percent, you'd be insulted," she says. "Yet many people pay the same rate for their credit cards without blinking an eye."

Even if you're not one of those consumers who carries too much debt, you can save money by shopping around. For the average consumer—who carries $2,500 on credit cards—knocking 6 percentage points off credit card interest can save $145 a year.

Counting on cards with the lowest rates in America is not the best strategy, though. These issuers accept very few applicants.

"I've gotten a lot of calls from disappointed consumers who applied for cards with a 7 percent or 8 percent rate," said Robert B. McKinley, president of RAM Research Corporation, which publishes CardTrak, a consumer newsletter. "One in 10 gets approved. And it takes months for approval."

In addition, many credit cards that offer extremely low rates also have high annual fees and low credit limits, making them expensive and virtually worthless for some consumers.

And some card issuers offset lower interest rates by using alternate formulas for calculating the balance that's subject to finance charges or they don't offer a grace period. This can often result in higher finance charges.

Service and benefits are also important factors to consider when shopping around for a good credit card.

For example, how much will you be responsible for if your card is lost or stolen? Are there added benefits like travel and accident insurance when using your card or loss and damage protection if you rent a car with the card?

To find the best card for you, think about the way you use it. If you don't pay off your balance every month, try to find the lowest possible interest rate. You should be able to find something in the 14-percent range.

If you pay off the balance every month, look for a card with a low annual fee and a grace period.

Remember that the grace period—or the period during which you accumulate no interest on your card—applies only if you have no balance. If you carry a balance on your card, you pay interest from the day you make the charge.

If you get a card with a rate that is significantly lower than the cards you have now, transfer the balances over to pay them off at the lower rate. "It amazes me how many people fail to do this when they could save money so effortlessly," Detweiler says.

—Mary Rowland

The NEA Credit Card Program offers a choice of three cards with competitive interest rates, annual fees, and a grace period.

For more information on the NEA "School Days" MasterCard, the NEA Premier Gold MasterCard, or the NEA-Retired MasterCard, or to request a consumer guide on Understanding Credit, call NEA Member Benefits, 800/637-4636.

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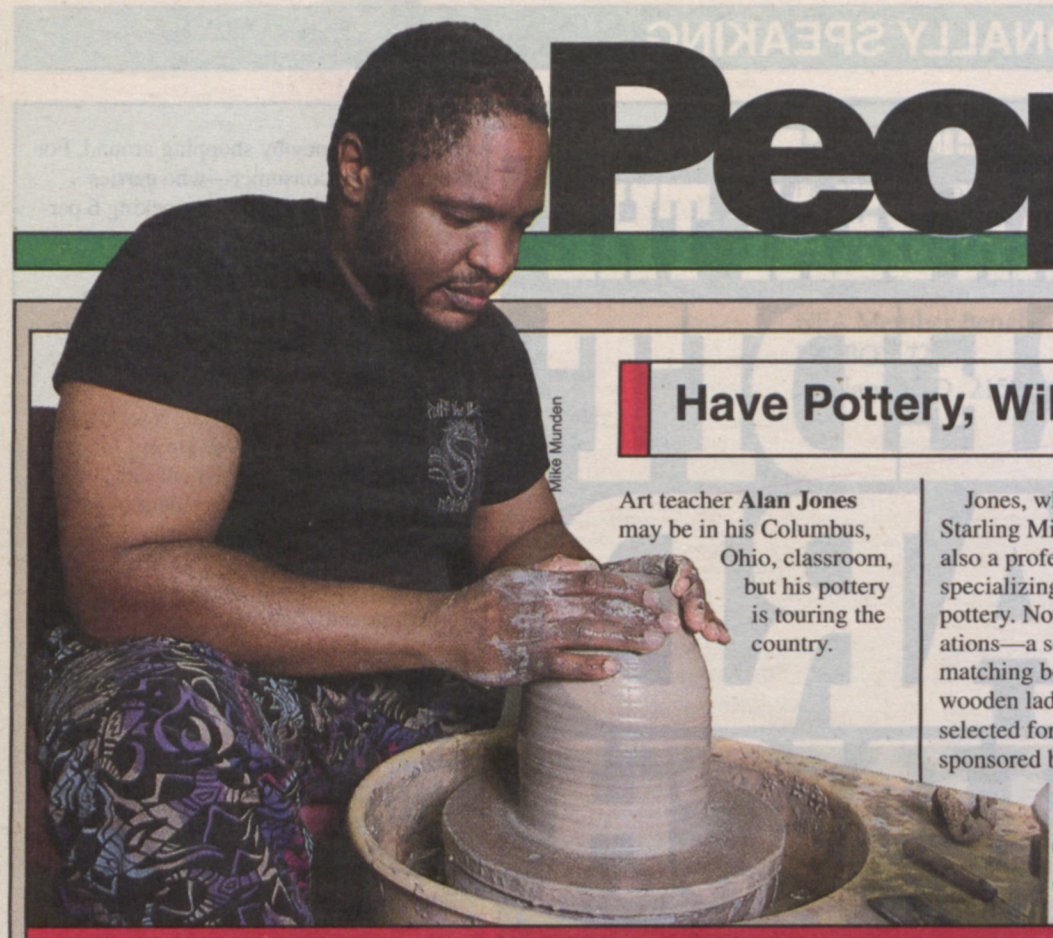
7%	$366,695

How Long $286,000 Will Maintain $20,000 Purchasing Power

If Inflation Is:	Savings Will Last:
4%	20 years
5%	18 years
6%	16 1/2 years
7%	15 1/2 years

Source: "Directing Your Own Mutual Fund Investments" from The Mutual Fund Education Alliance, 1993

People


Mike Munden

Have Pottery, Will Travel

Art teacher **Alan Jones** may be in his Columbus, Ohio, classroom, but his pottery is touring the country.

Jones, who teaches at Starling Middle School, is also a professional artist specializing in functional pottery. Now one of his creations—a soup tureen with matching bowls and wooden ladle—has been selected for a national tour sponsored by the Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center at Wilberforce (Ohio) University.

The tour, called Uncommon Beauty and Common Objects, will bring the work of African American artists to museums in New York, Atlanta, Dallas, San Diego, and Washington, D.C. over the next two years.

The entire collection of art is currently on display at Wilberforce, and will start the tour at the American Craft Museum in New York City on March 10.

Jones has been showing and selling his creations at Columbus area exhibits and craft shows for the last 19 years.

He notes, though, that his entire house could be considered a display area of his work—his creations include everything from the dishes to the shelves to the bird bath and water fountain in his yard.

Three-dimensional art, Jones says, has always been a natural form of expression for him.

From Audubon to Zurbarán

In between clay, weaving, and holiday art classes, Indiana art teacher **Martyna Bellessis** (below) and colleague **Francie Agostino** teach elementary students art history.

Following the alphabet, third graders start with Audubon and end with Ingres, fourth graders make their way from Jawlensky to Remington, and fifth graders go from Seurat to Zurbarán.

Using three workbooks they designed themselves, the two Bloomington, Indiana, teachers believe "art is a discipline, not a frill."

"An educated person should have a knowledge of the great artists," Bellessis says. "And if we don't teach it to them, who will?"

So they start with John James Audubon. The third graders at University Elementary School learn that he was "really a draft dodger, who's dad didn't want him to fight in the French Revolution." They learn about his art, his birds, and about extinction. Then they design their own bird—real or imagined—in an "appropriate habitat."

The kids love it, Bellessis says, and when they're in fifth grade, they know more about art than 99 percent of the American population. "Art history doesn't have to be slides, slides, slides," she notes. "It can be fun and exciting. It can be storytelling."

For more information about the three-volume set of workbooks, ABC Artist, *write to Bellessis at 818 Anthony Ct., Bloomington, IN 47401. Upcoming this fall, an A to Z series featuring only female artists.*

Tom Strickland

When That Great Ship Went Down

Charles Haas arrived at dawn. The North Atlantic stretched as far as the eye could see.

But the horizon held little interest for the New Jersey English teacher. He'd traveled four days by plane, fishing boat, and water taxi to see only one thing—and it was two-and-a-half miles down. He came—as teacher, author, and historian—to see the Titanic.

"I started reading about the Titanic when I was about 12 or 13," Haas explains. "Whenever I had a spare minute in college, I read microfilm news reports of the disaster."

In the 1980s, Haas coauthored two books on the tragedy. And last June, his "wildest dream" came true: he was invited by expedition leader George Tulloch to see the ship's remains firsthand.

The submarine's descent took 90 minutes. The pilot, copilot, and Haas were confined in a sphere seven feet in diameter. For 10 hours, Haas lay flat on his stomach, his head propped on his elbows, staring out a four-inch portal fitted with a wide-angle lens.

"I saw where the ship's hull cracked open, where the music played to keep people calm. I was close enough to touch the telephone the lookout used to advise the captain of the iceberg."

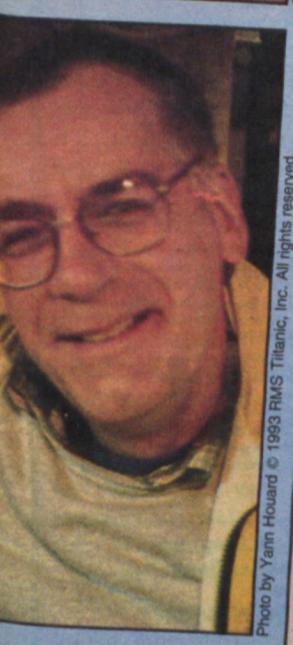
Beyond the personal thrill of it all, Haas is committed to preserving the artifacts recovered by this and previous expeditions and telling the ship's tragic story That night, 1523 people died, 705 survived—only 10 are still alive today. "The Titanic was a floating slice of society, and a turning point in history," he says.

"As a boy, my father and I would take long walks," he recalls. "I'd look at hills of mud and envision little villages with canals, things like that.

"Also, when my parents weren't looking, my brother and I would throw pails of water out a back window of our home, and then go into the yard to form things in the mud.

"I love creating these objects so much that if I didn't do it," he says, "I think I'd actually become physically ill."

Photo by Yann Houard © 1993 RMS Titanic, Inc. All rights reserved.



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Photographs by Andrew Rafkind

Art on the Road

With just five students and a town population of only 300, Atlanta School in Atlanta, Idaho, can't afford an art teacher.

But Mountain Home High School, nestled in the Sawtooth Mountains 40 miles southeast of Boise, can. They've got **Jennifer Williams**—and they're willing to share her.

For the past 15 years, Williams and her Mountain Home students have been bringing art projects to rural elementary schools within a day's drive that have no art education specialist.

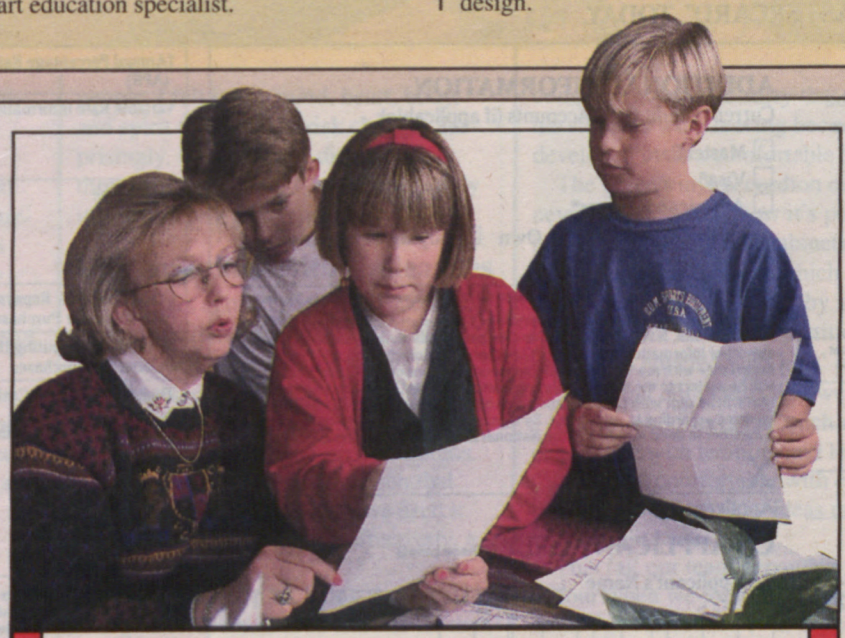
First with her own money, then with small grants, now with a two-year $15,000 grant—the award for being U.S. West's Outstanding Teacher of the Year—Williams and a carload of her students (different ones each trip) travel several times a year to schools to work with younger students.

Everyone benefits, Williams says. At Atlanta school (pictured above), the rural kids learned how to work with clay and plastic, paint a mural, and create a batik design.

The Mountain Home students—four on this trip—gained new experiences and learned the value of sharing.

At each school visited, Williams performs the introductions and then turns the show over to her students, who present the lessons. The experience has convinced several of them to pursue a teaching career.

"The project is a lot of hard work, but it's a real high," says Williams. "For me, it reinforces my decision to go into teaching in the first place."



Bob Riha, Jr.

Top Honors from Disney

California elementary teacher and NEA member **Patricia Ann Baltz** says her students have "done everything" from constructing wind vehicles to designing space vehicles to creating paintings while lying on their backs as Michelangelo did when painting the Sistine Chapel.

"If I can make each child feel special, unique, if I can encourage my students to become risk takers, then I'm fulfilling my own dreams as a teacher," says Baltz.

This time, however, it's Baltz who's feeling special. In November, she was chosen by 35 of her peers to receive top honors at the Disney American Teacher Awards.

Baltz, who was named outstanding elementary teacher and shares the top award with Texas high school athletic coach **Leta Andrews,** will receive $25,000 from Disney. Her school will receive $25,000; her district,$10,000.

"The world needs to take note of what Disney's doing in publicizing good teaching and the wonderful things that are happening in public schools," says Baltz, who was featured in the California Teachers Association campaign against vouchers.

Baltz is using her prize money as a gift to her colleagues and students at Camino Grove Elementary School. An enthusiastic advocate of Space Camp in Huntsville, Alabama, she's established a scholarship fund that will enable one teacher and a group of students to go each year.

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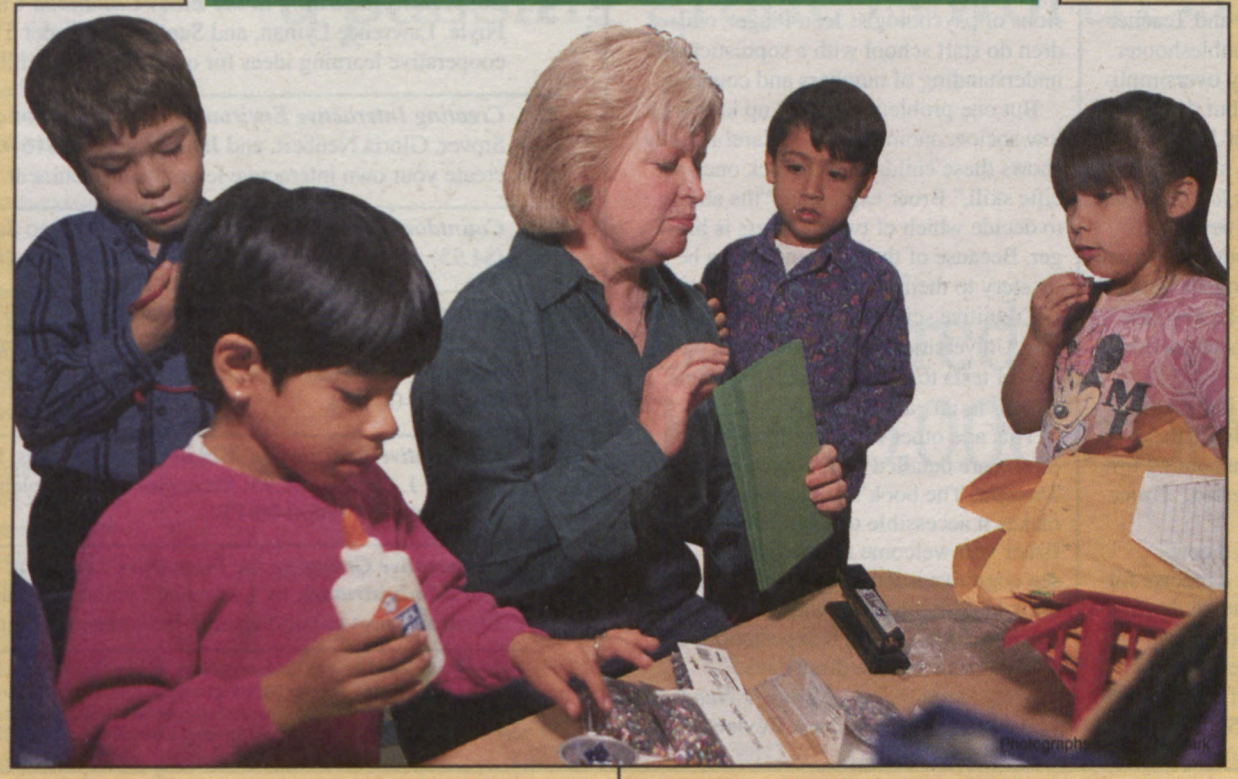
2/94

SOUNDING BOARD

RISKING CHANGE

A 21-year teacher takes a chance that she can be a better teacher and her students will do better, too.



Conversations with Bianca

Bianca stood at the door of the pre-kindergarten classroom. Her red backpack, filled with Kleenex, crayons, glue, scissors, and a change of clothes, was almost too heavy for her to carry.

She held her mother's hand tightly and peered in with huge brown eyes. Her feet remained planted at the threshold as her eyes moved slowly around the room. I welcomed Bianca and her mother in.

Thus began Bianca's and my year of growth and change.

School began, and Bianca spent most of her time silently observing everything that happened in the room. She participated in activities, but always on the fringe. She seldom spoke, and spent her fall and winter reading books, drawing, putting puzzles together, and exploring the housekeeping center.

By the time spring came, Bianca began to respond verbally if the other children or I asked something of her. Occasionally she would initiate conversations with other students, but never with me or my teaching partner.

The following year, our faculty implemented multi-age classes. My teaching partner, Shirley, and I each had a combination of pre-K and kindergarten students—including Bianca.

On the first day of school, Bianca stood at the same threshold, but this time as a kindergarten student. She still had a red backpack loaded with new school supplies and she was still holding her mother's hand. But this year she led her mother into the room with a huge smile on her face.

Although Bianca continued to spend her time reading books, assembling puzzles, and working with other activities that interested her, she was constantly talking with the other children.

Soon she was making short requests of my teammate and me. Next she was making books and asking one of us to write her words on the pages. Then one day we went to the circus, and it was as if a dam had burst. She sat beside me and never stopped talking the entire time.

Conversations with Myself

Like Bianca, I needed time and space to construct meaning for myself. I had received hours of training in cooperative learning, the "quality school," developmentally appropriate activities for young children, and multi-age learning.

I'd begun to have reflective conversations with myself and my teammate. I had taught for 21 years and was regarded as highly successful in my district. Yet I felt that both the children in my class and I had potential that had not been realized.

Finally, after a year of genuine conversations with myself and other supportive people, I felt in my mind, heart, body, and spirit that I had to risk change. Surprisingly, I found that I didn't have to throw out everything I knew, only apply it in a different framework.

Conversations with Colleagues

Three years ago, a green vinyl accordion curtain separated my teammate's room from mine. On Friday afternoons, we opened the curtain wide enough for a four-year-old to squeeze through and let our children move between both rooms.

Sometimes it was hard to open that curtain even a foot, because we used it for bulletin boards. It was, effectively, a wall.

Then we had a population explosion of four-year-olds and added another teacher, Luis. His portable was to be built during the winter holidays, but the foundation had not been poured by our return.

We immediately decided to open that green vinyl accordion curtain to accommodate a third teacher. Since our new teammate was a beginning teacher, Shirley and I felt an obligation to be his mentors.

As time passed, we all found ourselves enjoying the time spent sharing ideas and information. When the new portable was completed, we were sorry that Luiz and his students were leaving because we had developed such a comfortable bond.

The green vinyl accordion curtain never closed again. Now it's permanently blocked *open* by filing cabinets and Shirley's and my desks, which are joined together so we can sit side by side and talk and plan. The small partition that remains is covered with kids' papers, memos, and clipboards that we both use.

Shirley and I have had such a positive experience with teaming and learning to trust and be comfortable with each other that we are open to any ideas that the other might have.

This fall our team expanded from two to four when we joined two teachers with multi-age classes for 6- to 8-year-olds. They, too, had experienced successful teaming experiences with each other. The four of us trusted each other enough that we were comfortable beginning the year not knowing answers to questions but willing to listen and work together.

At first, we had more structured learning experiences with different groups and ages of children. As the year progressed, we moved into more natural learning experiences with the children choosing their own groups.

Children and adults were simultaneously and gradually moving in the direction of an open-ended learning environment. Our expanded teaching team had realized that we were not in search of an "answer" or "the right model." The only *answer* was to maintain a never-ending and ever-expanding conversation.

Conversations with Parents

Many times I had sat at a table with a parent or parents, holding a child's checklist between us, meticulously describing each skill and their child's level of mastery.

I particularly remember one meeting in which I reported to the parents that through testing, I'd discovered that their child knew none of his colors. The parents told me that *at home* he knew all his colors. I knew that there had to be something wrong with such discrepancies. We had to include the parents in our conversation.

This year, my partner and I began our conferences by meeting with each child in both of our rooms together. We replaced the checklist with descriptive inventories in which we asked parents to provide information. We filled in the information *together*. Eliminating the checklist transformed the conference. We had opened another green curtain.

The initial exchange of information about the child by the parents and ourselves was followed by a kind of discovery. Together, we had new insights and developed deeper understandings of the child. Together, we charted our next steps.

I thought that I had done a good job with conferences before. Now I was a part of real dialogues among three or four adults, sharing information about a child and working together for the child's benefit.

This spring, each child will join us in a three-way conference to share the work that he has collected and reflect on the learning he has experienced this year.

I can hardly wait to hear the conversations and be a part of the discovery when yet another curtain is opened.

—Jan Bailey Hedrick

Jan Bailey Hedrick teaches pre-K and kindergarten at Travis Heights Elementary School in Austin, Texas. Travis Heights is one of three schools in Austin that are part of NEA's Mastery in Learning Consortium.

BOOK BEAT

Revolution in Learning Research

Beyond Piaget: computer analogies are supplying new models for understanding how kids learn—and fail to learn.

Schools for Thought: A Science of Learning in the Classroom
John T. Bruer
MIT Press. 324 pp. $29.95.

Dennis Caldwell

John T. Bruer

If Mind = Computer, then Learning Research = Computer Science, and Teacher = Troubleshooter. Vastly oversimplified, but that's the gist of John Bruer's message in *Schools for Thought.*

Bruer's book is about the new cognitive science that's come about since computer scientists and psychologists noticed almost 40 years ago that, at an abstract level, the human mind works an awful lot like a computer.

"Prior to the existence of information processing, researchers studying the human mind had a hard time coming up with models that could be tested," Bruer recently told *NEA Today*.

"Now psychologists have a new applied science of learning: a precise formal language to describe knowledge and the skills a person needs to organize and apply that knowledge," Bruer said.

Bruer, who is president of the James S. McDonnell Foundation, in St. Louis, was involved in the early efforts by cognitive scientists to use their work to improve medical education. This convinced him that cognitive science could also simulate children's thinking—and help teach them more effectively.

Already cognitive science has produced useful knowledge, such as the realization that contrary to the conclusions of psychologist Jean Piaget, children do start school with a sophisticated understanding of numbers and counting.

But one problem can hold up kids with low socioeconomic status. "Careful study shows these children often lack one specific skill," Bruer explained, "the ability to decide which of two numbers is bigger. Because of that, arithmetic can be a mystery to them."

Cognitive scientists at Clark and Stanford Universities have developed a battery of tests to diagnose such problems, as well as an early math curriculum.

This and other research-based teaching efforts are detailed in *Schools for Thought.* The book's nontechnical style makes it accessible to school staff. And Bruer will welcome teacher readers. "I see cognitive science generally—and the book in particular—as ways to help teachers fulfill the high expectations that society has for them these days."

—Nancy R. Needham
Book Review Editor

The NEA Professional Library's Top Ten

NEA Bestsellers

Current Rank	
1	***Student Portfolios,*** by Laura Grosvenor, et al. ($9.95) Insights from your colleagues in the first of NEA's new Teacher-to-Teacher books. (#2901-1-00-FB) [1]
2	***Cooperative Learning in the Elementary Classroom,*** by Lawrence Lyman, Harvey C. Foyle, and Tara Azwell. ($14.95) Links the benefits of cooperative learning to whole language, to portfolio assessment, and to classroom diversity. ($14.95). (#3042-7-00-FB)
3	***At-Risk, Low Achieving Students in the Classroom,*** by Judy Brown Lehr and Hazel Wiggins Harris. ($9.95) No miracles, but this book covers more than 100 practical ideas for improvement. (#3338-8-00-FB) [5]
4	***Student Team Learning: A Practical Guide to Cooperative Learning. 3rd Edition,*** by Robert E. Slavin. ($18.95) A down-to-earth approach to effective cooperative learning from a leading expert. (#1845-1-00-FB) [9]
5	***Cooperative Learning in the Early Childhood Classroom,*** by Harvey C. Foyle, Lawrence Lyman, and Sandra Alexander Thies. ($11.95) Practical cooperative learning ideas for use with young children. (#0361-6-00-FB)
6	***Creating Interactive Environments in the Secondary School,*** by Lois Stover, Gloria Neubert, and James Lawlor. ($16.95) This book helps you create your own interactive learning environment. (#3351-5-00-FB)
7	***Countdown to the First Day of School,*** by Leo Schell and Paul Burden. ($4.95) A must-have checklist for new teachers. (#2150-9-00-FB) [8]
8	***Invitational Teaching, Learning, and Living,*** by William Watson Purkey and Paula Helen Stanley. ($10.95) A blueprint for what teachers can do in their classrooms to improve teaching, learning, and living. (#3049-4-00-FB)
9	***Cooperative Learning in Middle-Level Schools,*** by Jerry Rottier and Beverly J. Ogan. ($11.95) Strategies that complement the middle school philosophy. (#3068-0-00-FB)
10	***Cooperative Grouping for Interactive Learning: Students, Teachers, and Administrators,*** by Lawrence Lyman and Harvey C. Foyle. ($11.95) Dynamic ways to build change-inducing groupings. (#1842-7-00-FB)

Numbers in brackets indicate last month's rank, if any. All the resources listed above are published by and available from the NEA Professional Library, a service for NEA members financed solely by the sale of books and other professional development materials to the education community. To order any book listed here or for more information, call 800/229-4200.

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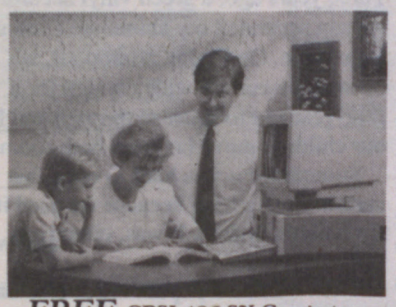
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Exploring the Options

As the nation's over-65 population grows, so does the number of alternatives to nursing home care.

As recently as a decade ago, a nursing home was the only viable option for older adults who could no longer care for themselves. Today there are alternatives for those who don't need elaborate medical care—alternatives that offer residents lower costs, friendlier atmospheres, and encouragement to live as independently as possible for as long as possible.

➤ *Assisted living*, barely a drawing-board concept a dozen years ago, is one of the fastest growing alternatives to nursing home care. The Assisted Living Facilities Association of America (ALFAA) estimates that there are now 30,000 to 40,000 residences in existence, housing over a million people.

Assisted living replaces nursing home care with personal care. Residents are usually offered private or semi-private rooms or apartments, preferably with their own bathrooms and kitchenettes, plus meal, laundry, and housekeeping services.

Personal care services—like help with bathing, dressing, and getting in and out of bed—are available, but residents are encouraged to remain independent and exercise as much control over their lives as possible.

A recent study from the National Academy for State Health Policy in Portland, Maine, found that the cost of assisted living arrangements varies from $900 to $3,000 per month, somewhat less than the cost of most nursing homes.

Nevertheless, assisted living is often too expensive for low- and moderate-income Americans, since most fees must be paid out-of-pocket. In general, neither Medicare, Medicaid, nor long-term care insurance covers assisted-living expenses.

Consumers should also be aware of the great variation among assisted-living facilities. Because the industry is relatively new, the scope and quality of services can vary widely from one facility to another.

"Part of the problem is that states use different terms to license these facilities," explains Carol Fraser Fisk, executive director of ALFAA and a former U.S. commissioner on aging.

"At minimum, residents should expect three meals a day, special diets when needed, assistance with day-to-day activities, 24-hour staff availability, transportation to doctors' offices and other destinations, and an activities program," Fisk says.

➤ *Congregate living* may be best for people who need only minimal personal assistance. Typically, residents have their own apartments and take at least one meal a day in a common dining room. Recreational activities are usually offered, as is transportation to the supermarket and other places.

Congregate-care facilities rarely offer medical or personal care (though some offer personal care at extra cost), nor are they staffed on a 24-hour basis, which could be a problem in an emergency. The cost may be somewhat higher than apartment rentals in the community.

➤ *Continuing-care retirement communities* (CCRC) charge a large up-front fee, followed by ongoing monthly charges, in exchange for a guarantee that the resident will be taken care of for life—no matter what level of care is eventually needed.

There are many variations of CCRCs, but typically three levels of care are offered: independent living, assisted living and skilled nursing care on the premises, and transfer for care at an affiliated nursing home.

While CCRCs offer the security that comes with ongoing care, the cost of this care can be prohibitive. The up-front fee can be as high as $50,000 or more, plus $700 or more per month.

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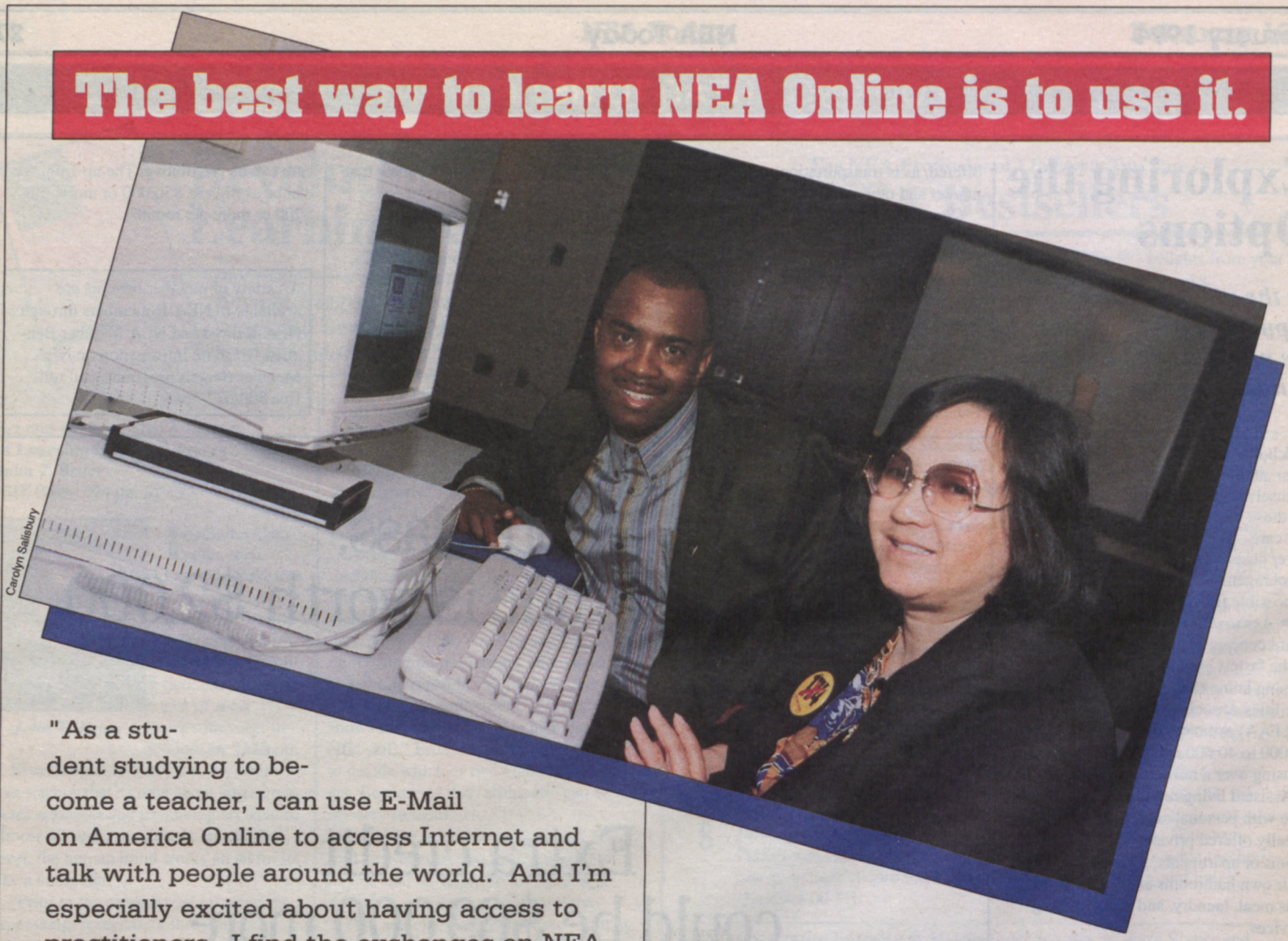

Carolyn Salisbury

"As a student studying to become a teacher, I can use E-Mail on America Online to access Internet and talk with people around the world. And I'm especially excited about having access to practitioners. I find the exchanges on NEA Online invaluable.

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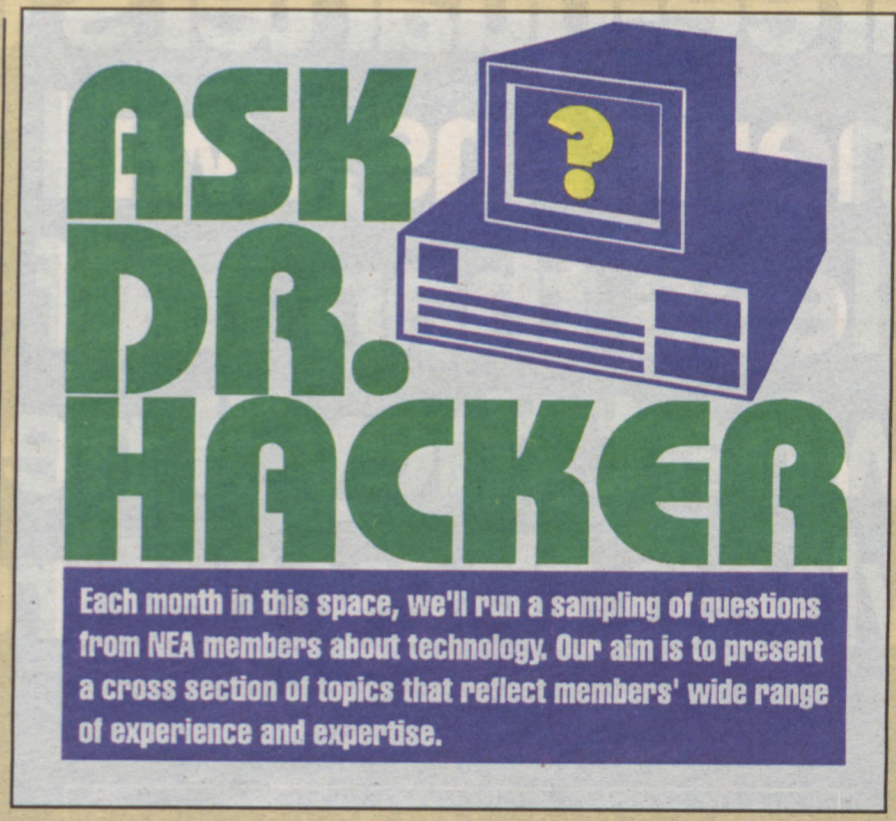

ASK
DR.
HACKER
Each month in this space, we'll run a sampling of questions from NEA members about technology. Our aim is to present a cross section of topics that reflect members' wide range of experience and expertise.

Q Are there risks in buying computers by direct mail rather than through a local store? What things should you look out for?

A Yes, there are risks in buying by mail order. There are all sorts of stories about organizations ordering computers by mail, then finding out the computers don't work properly and the company that supplies them has gone out of business.

You can limit the risk greatly by ordering from companies that have good reputations. Apple, IBM, Compaq, Dell, and several other computer companies have a direct buy program. They come with excellent guarantees and service in case you have problems.

Direct mail ordering can save you money and is certainly necessary in more rural areas. Ordering software through direct mail can also save money and is convenient, too. There are many excellent mail order companies. Just check their reputation before you pay.

Q Could you describe AppleLink and how it works? What about other similar networks especially designed for school use?

A AppleLink works like many other on-line services. It has an easy-to-use interface and is Apple Computer Corporation's corporate E-mail and Bulletin Board system. I'm not sure about using it with students. The meter runs based on how long the system is used.

Scholastic has created a student system using America Online that looks as though it has good student potential. You pre-buy a block of time for a number of hours per month. It gives you control of how much to budget for the year.

We've just previewed a demo of PBS Learning Link. The preview looked excellent and included QuickTime video segments. It should provide an excellent student resource with a fixed rate for student use. Check with your local PBS station about the service. It will be available in the near future. For more information, phone 703/739-8464.

Q Are there any videos out that show school technology applications that would be useful to school employees?

A There are a number of videos that highlight education or business applications. Apple, IBM, and AT&T have videos aimed at creating a vision of how technology can change education.

Apple has a number of videos on specific educational applications. They're available from the Apple Video Fulfillment Program at 800/825-2145 at a cost of $8.

Both Apple and IBM have produced materials for technology planning. The Apple kit contains video, laser disc, or QuickTime materials. Call Intellimation at 800/346-8355 for information on the *Teaching, Learning, and Technology Planning Guide*.

IBM's EdQuest has a video and many useful materials for planning and grant writing. Call 800/IBM-4EDU for information.

Videos about specific software applications are often available from many software publishers. One of the best is Sunburst/Wings for Learning. The videos provide a preview of the software being used with students. Call 800/321-7511 for information on how to get the videos on a free 45-day loan.

In 1992, the International Society for Technology (ISTE) in Education produced a report called "Vision: TEST" and three videos to support it. They cost $39.95 each. Call 800/336-5191 for information.

Q How should I start my elementary students with multimedia?

A Slow and easy, using Hyperstudio on the Macintosh. Roger Wagner's Hyperstudio allows students to use text, audio, QuickTime movie, laser disc images, and graphics to create and present information.

I've started with students as early as third grade, creating buttons connected to animation. The exciting part is that curiosity gets the best of the students and they want to know about other applications of the programs.

For $398 for a site license covering 10 computers, Hyperstudio is an affordable way to provide hands-on multimedia production for elementary students. The program comes with a very easy-to-follow manual and great technical support.

Q What is ITV, and how can it enhance my teaching?

A Instructional Television (ITV) provides a very specific kind of instructional video demonstrating teaching and learning strategies that have proved effective in the classroom.

It's the most cost-effective educational technology available to public school educators because it's delivered by local ITV PBS stations that are supported, in part, by funding from the state's technology budget.

Program content targets certain age groups and grade levels and supports specific curriculum objectives in science, mathematics, English/language arts, history/social studies, and visual and performing arts.

The programs, designed to fit within the context of a lesson, are usually between 5 and 20 minutes long. ITV agencies provide resources, printed materials, and staff development training at school sites on how to use ITV as part of classroom instruction.

"Extended ITV rights" allow easy and efficient off-air taping, tape retention for later use, and circulation. Call your local ITV agency to obtain its ITV program schedule.

Q Last month's column listed a host of resources to tap into for technology ideas. Got some more?

A We'll keep listing the latest resources as they come along. *Using Technology to Support Education Reform*, new from the Department of Education, seems especially good. To order this booklet for $7, call 301/953-7974, order number 065-000-00604-9.

One more to highlight: *The Children's Machine, Rethinking School in the Age of the Computer* by Seymour Papert. Papert explores what's happened to the computer revolution in education and explains how we should rethink education, letting students become creators of their own knowledge. It's published by BasicBooks and available from ISTE at 800/336-5191 for $22.50.

Questions for Dr. Hacker are answered by two NEA members—California elementary science teacher Lyn Chan and Michigan techology coordinator Keith Zook.

If you have a question for Dr. Hacker on any topic—from NEA Online to desktop publishing—write Dr. Hacker at NEA Center, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036, or use NEA Online. Just keyword NEA Today.

For details about getting on NEA Online, subscription costs, and more, please see page 28 of this issue.

NEA Online Update

NEA has prepared an action plan to help NEA rural members who must make a toll call to access NEA Online, the new electronic comunications network. The plan is a step-by-step guide to help these members fight for rate relief. Among the suggested ideas offered by the action plan:

➤Contact Sprint (800/736-1130) and Tymnet (800/336-0149). These two companies handle the phone traffic for NEA Online, and can tell you if any new nodes (local connecting points) have been added to your local calling area.

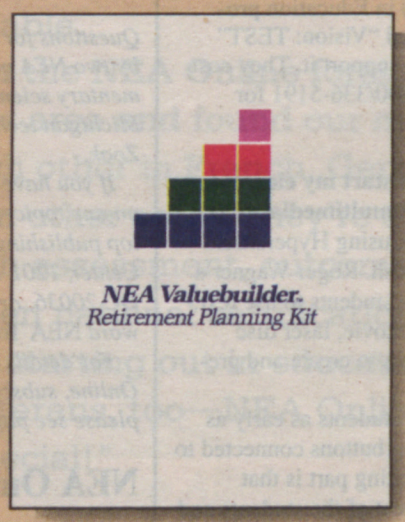
➤Call your local telephone company; some may be willing to adjust tariffs and reduce the toll charge.

➤Mount a local campaign with other members who want NEA Online but can't get it without a toll charge.

The complete action plan is available through NEA Online or by writing to NEA Online, Action Plan, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

"Three-quarters of all Americans...will have less than half of what they'll need when they retire."

BARRON'S, JULY 12, 1993



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INTERNATIONAL

NEA Plays Key Role In UN Agency Founding

This is the second in a series of articles exploring the relationship between UNESCO, a United Nations agency, and NEA.

Part of NEA's history is its remarkable involvement in the debate that formulated the United Nations and UNESCO, the international organization for cooperation in education and related fields.

Although the NEA had advanced the need for international understanding as a foundation for world stability and peace during the early decades of the 20th century, it wasn't until World War II that NEA leaders focused on the eventual establishment of the United Nations and its specialized agencies.

At the beginning of the war, NEA delegates passed a resolution calling for all nations to plan for post-war reconstruction and asserting that international education programs would be crucial to maintain peace once achieved. Education for peace became NEA's guiding principle.

In 1945, the Truman Administration asked NEA to appoint a consultant to the United States delegation to the San Francisco conference that would draft the United Nations charter.

NEA President Frank Schlagle appointed Dr. William Carr—secretary of the Educational Policies Commission, a joint endeavor of NEA and the American Association of School Administrators, and later NEA executive director (1952-1967).

After a hard-fought struggle, the final language of the charter included nine explicit references to education and incorporated international education cooperation as one of the U.N.'s key responsibilities.

While the charter established the principle of education cooperation, it was left to the Conference for the Establishment of an Educational and Cultural Organization—the London conference—to establish a way to forge international cooperation and an organization to manage it.

NEA was significantly involved in the London conference. The NEA President and two members of the NEA International Relations Committee were advisers to the U.S. delegation; a member of the Educational Policies Commission was a U.S. delegate; and Dr. Carr was chosen as deputy secretary general of the conference. Carr was also asked to staff a committee that would draft the preamble and statement of purpose for the constitution of the new international agency.

This committee decided to call the new organization the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Making education the first element of the name was deliberate and emphasized its importance.

Agreement on the organization's name gave the agency the distinction of having the longest and most cumbersome official title of any of the specialized agencies of the U.N. As a result, the organization is almost always referred to by its acronym, UNESCO.

At the close of the conference, a French representative summarized the deliberation by saying, "San Francisco made the United Nations one body; London gave the United Nations a soul."

Following the London Conference, NEA representatives, affiliates, and members actively worked for Congressional approval of U.S. participation in UNESCO. It passed in April 1946.

The first article in this series appeared in November and explained UNESCO's structure and governance. A future article will deal with the events surrounding the United States' withdrawal from UNESCO.

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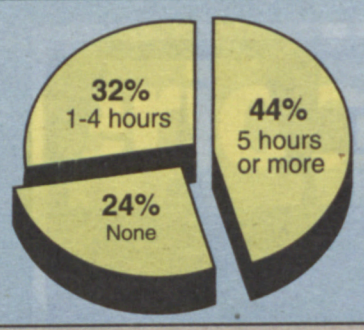
DATA BANK

Kids' First Teachers

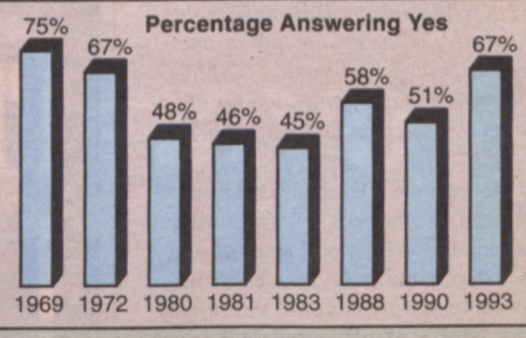
Here's how much time parents say they're spending each week helping their kids with homework.



Source: *USA Today*, 20/20 Research for Shoney's Restaurants

Career Choices

Would you like your child to become a public school teacher?



Source: *Phi Delta Kappan*/Gallup Poll

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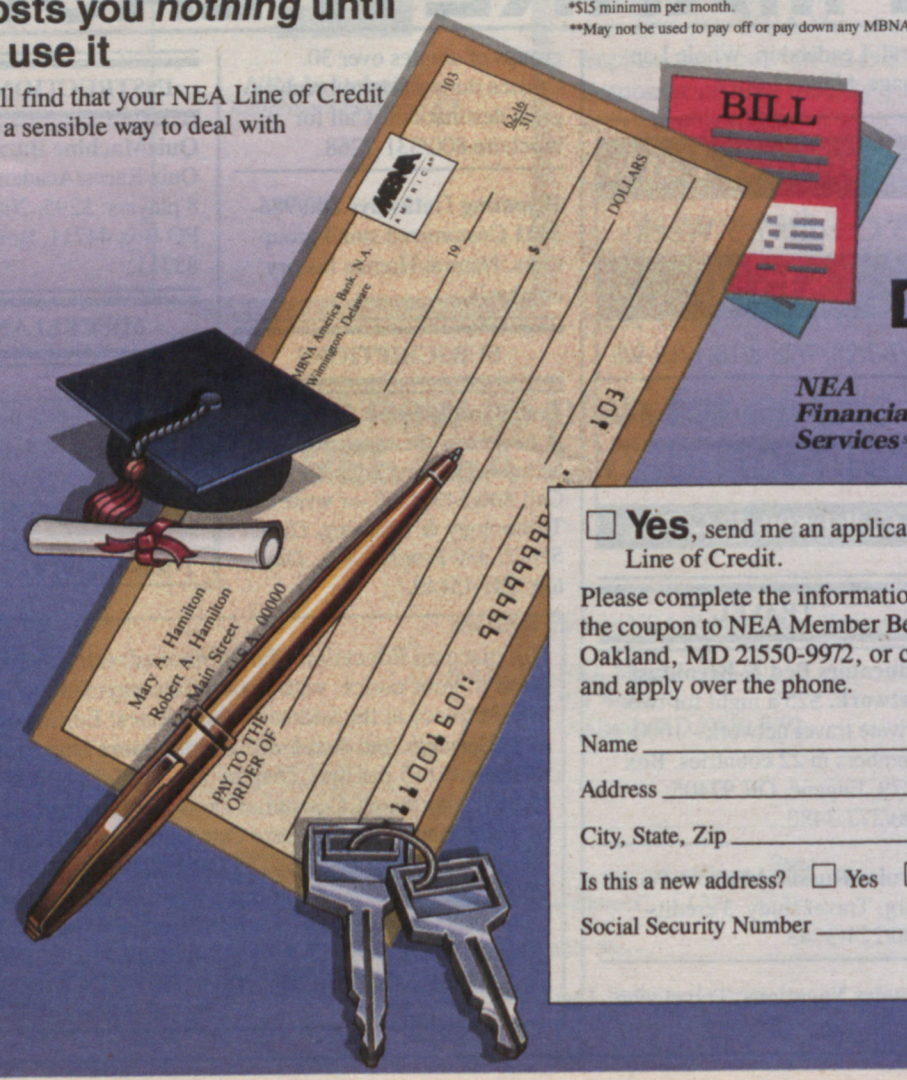

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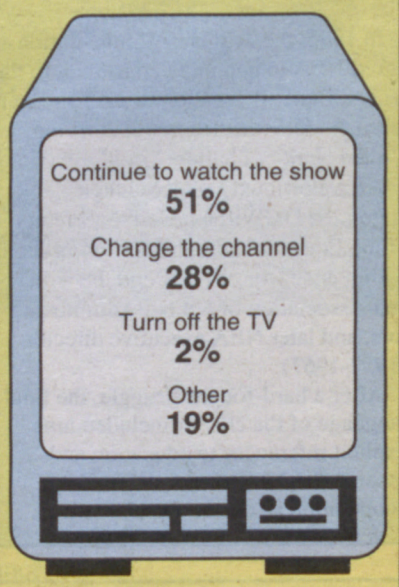
TLC024

Kids Talk About TV Violence

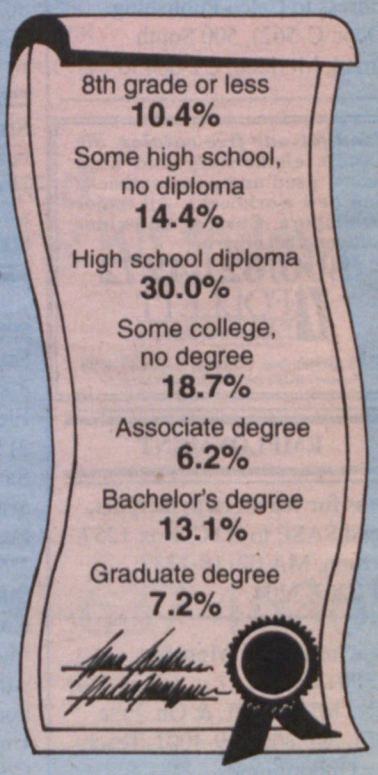
What do 2,000 sixth graders think about violence on TV? Just over half (51 percent) say there's too much of it. What do they do when they see a violent scene?



Source: *Weekly Reader* survey, 1993

How Much School?

In 1990, 20 percent of Americans had a 4-year college degree. Here are the highest educational attainment levels for adults in the U.S. in 1990.



Source: *Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac*

NEA FINANCIAL REPORT

A Report from NEA Secretary-Treasurer Marilyn Monahan

As NEA Secretary-Treasurer, I am happy to present to you our audited financial statements for the fiscal year ended August 31, 1993, with comparative data for the previous year.

Once again NEA experienced a positive year in 1992-93! Not only did we increase membership by adding 29,000 new members to our organization, but we also ended the year with General Fund revenues exceeding expenses by more than $511,000. This growth adds strength to our already fiscally sound organization and enables us to continue to meet our members' needs and fulfill our mission. Each of you should be very proud of these accomplishments.

While columns and columns of financial data can seem quite imposing, let me focus your attention on three key elements of an audit that I believe will be useful in simplifying your analysis of NEA's audit report as well as others you may review in the future.

The first is the "opinion letter." This statement by the auditors summarizes their engagement and lets the reader know that the work was performed in accordance with "generally accepted auditing standards." Ours is a "clean opinion" issued without any qualifying comments. It is the "best" kind of opinion letter to receive.

The second is the ratio of our Current Assets (what we own) to our Current Liabilities (what we owe). This ratio should be at least 2:1 that is, $2 of current assets for each $1 of current liabilities. NEA meets this objective.

The third is the Fund Balance (the net difference between total assets and total liabilities). It should be a positive balance and sufficient to stabilize an organization not only during troubled times but also to serve as a source of funds for special projects, future growth and other fiscal demands as deemed appropriate. This year, we are presenting NEA's General Fund, Special Purpose Funds, and Capital Improvement Fund Balances on one page to allow you to see the total net worth of NEA. The combined Fund Balance is in excess of $39 million, a level at which we can take both pride and comfort.

Accompanying the financial statements and referenced throughout are footnotes provided as supplemental information and narrative backup to the dollars presented and I would encourage you to read them.

Membership growth, fiscal stability, and sound allocation of NEA's resources combined to make 1992-93 an outstanding year for NEA!

At the end of the Audit Report (on page 35), you will find a summary detailing by broad categories how the 1993-94 NEA dues are allocated. It is intended to help you better understand the NEA Budget and see at a glance where monies are spent to help NEA achieve its mission.

REPORT OF INDEPENDENT ACCOUNTANTS

To the Executive Committee and Members of the National Education Association of the United States

We have audited the accompanying balance sheet of the National Education Association of the United States (a nonprofit corporation incorporated by an Act of the United States Congress) as of August 31, 1993. We previously audited and reported upon the separate balance sheets of the General Fund and Capital Improvement Fund and consolidated balance sheet of the Special Purpose Funds for the year ended August 31, 1992, which have been combined and are presented for comparative purpose only. We have also audited the related statements of activity and related schedule of area expenses by type, changes in fund balance and changes in financial position of the General Fund; statements of activity and changes in fund balance of the Capital Improvement Fund and consolidated statements of activity and changes in fund balance of the Special Purpose Funds for the years ended August 31, 1993 and 1992. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Association's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audits.

We conducted our audits in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audits provide a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the National Education Association of the United States as of August 31, 1993, the results of operations and the changes in financial position of the General Fund, the results of operations of the Capital Improvement Fund, and the consolidated results of operations of the Special Purpose Funds for the years ended August 31, 1993 and 1992, in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.

Coopers & Lybrand

Washington, D.C.
November 12, 1993

NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES BALANCE SHEET

August 31, 1993
(with comparative totals at August 31, 1992)

ASSETS

	General Fund	Special Purpose Fund	Capital Improvement Fund	1993 Total Funds	1992 Total Funds
Current assets:					
Cash and cash equivalents	$14,529,306	$293,818	—	$14,823,124	$16,079,136
Membership dues receivable	26,768,527	—	—	26,768,527	25,850,797
Amounts due from affiliates and other organizations	1,442,595	—	—	1,442,595	1,653,502
Publication and advertising receivables	765,040	—	—	765,040	525,966
Accounts receivable	—	2,744,903	—	2,744,903	1,860,243
Prepaid expenses	3,276,921	1,139,943	—	4,416,864	2,966,600
Other current assets	818,416	—	—	818,416	914,950
Total current assets	47,600,805	4,178,664	—	51,779,469	49,851,194
Long-term assets:					
Notes receivable and other assets	99,670	—	—	99,670	1,657,130
Amount due from General Fund	—	8,112,653	—	8,112,653	6,144,584
Property, plant and equipment, at cost, net (Note 3)	6,619,060	544,990	68,617,326	75,781,376	73,634,852
Total long-term assets	6,718,730	8,657,643	68,617,326	83,993,699	81,436,566
Total assets	$54,319,535	$12,836,307	$68,617,326	$135,773,168	$131,287,760

LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCES

Current liabilities:					
Mortgage loan payable, current portion (Note 10)	—	—	$866,264	$866,264	$783,887
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	$14,670,167	$3,998,335	—	18,668,502	16,163,110
Accrued annual leave	4,864,287	—	—	4,864,287	4,171,151
Amounts held for affiliates and other organizations	292,808	—	—	292,808	288,272
Total current liabilities	19,827,262	3,998,335	866,264	24,691,861	21,406,420
Long-term liabilities:					
Mortgage loan payable (Note 10)	—	—	49,753,862	49,753,862	50,620,126
Accrued severance pay (Note 2)	3,924,283	—	—	3,924,283	3,655,657
Amount due to Special Purpose Funds	8,112,653	—	—	8,112,653	6,144,584
Deferred income, NEA-Retired	—	2,222,943	—	2,222,943	2,111,491
Accrued post-retirement benefits (Note 4)	7,914,278	—	—	7,914,278	7,914,278
Total long-term liabilities	19,951,214	2,222,943	49,753,862	71,928,019	70,446,136
Total liabilities	39,778,476	6,221,278	50,620,126	96,619,880	91,852,556
Fund balances	14,541,059	6,615,029	17,997,200	39,153,288	39,435,204
Total liabilities and fund balances	$54,319,535	$12,836,307	$68,617,326	$135,773,168	$131,287,760

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

GENERAL FUND STATEMENTS OF CHANGES IN FINANCIAL POSITION

for the years ended August 31, 1993 and 1992

	1993	1992
Sources of cash and cash equivalents from operations:		
Excess of revenue over expenses	$ 511,132	$ 123,343
Increase in excess of revenue over expenses from non-cash revenue and expenses:		
Depreciation and amortization	1,066,660	641,101
Other assets, net	1,653,994	1,476,534
Accrued severance pay	268,626	221,101
Amount due to Special Purpose Funds, net	1,968,069	1,383,761
Amount due from Capital Improvement Fund	—	8,596,461
Amounts held for affiliates and other organizations	4,536	103,352
Total sources of cash and cash equivalents	5,473,017	12,545,653
Uses of cash and cash equivalents:		
Membership dues receivable	917,730	3,456,506
Publication and advertising receivables	239,074	141,778
Prepaid expenses	594,705	470,052
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	(286,644)	1,936,181
Amounts due from affiliates and other organizations, net	(210,907)	541,312
Accrued fringe benefits	(693,136)	19,071
Purchase of equipment	2,551,152	1,846,862
Transfer to Capital Improvement Fund	2,462,463	3,686,036
Total uses of cash and cash equivalents	5,574,437	12,097,798
Net (decrease) increase in cash and cash equivalents	(101,420)	447,855
Cash and cash equivalents, beginning of year	14,630,726	14,182,871
Cash and cash equivalents, end of year	$14,529,306	$14,630,726

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

NEA FINANCIAL REPORT

SPECIAL PURPOSE FUNDS CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITY AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES

for the years ended August 31, 1993 and 1992

	Fund balances, August 31, 1991	Revenue: NEA appropriation	Revenue: Other	Expenses	Fund balances, August 31, 1992	Revenue: NEA appropriation	Revenue: Other	Expenses	Fund balances August 31, 1993
UniServ Fund (Note 2)	$ 927,091	$32,256,000	$ —	$32,374,852	$ 808,239	$34,645,151	$ —	$34,345,846	$1,107,544
Member Benefits Program	2,483,692	—	19,258,549	18,996,101	2,746,140		16,286,951	16,573,047	2,460,044
National Education Employees Assistance Fund (Note 6)	25,049	100,000	35,233	117,392	42,890	100,000	10,847	76,790	76,947
NEA-Retired Program Fund (Note 2)	2,256,854	682,299	654,198	882,469	2,710,882	508,580	460,273	709,241	2,970,494
	$5,692,686	$33,038,299	$19,947,980	$52,370,814	$6,308,151	$35,253,731	$16,758,071	$51,704,924	$6,615,029

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

GENERAL FUND STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN FUND BALANCE

Fund balance, August 31, 1991	$20,055,083
Excess of revenue over expenses and appropriations	123,343
Transfer to capital improvement fund (Note 12)	(3,686,036)
Fund balance, August 31, 1992	16,492,390
Excess of revenue over expenses and appropriations	511,132
Transfer to capital improvement fund (Note 12)	(2,462,463)
Fund balance, August 31, 1993	**$14,541,059**

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITY AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES

for the years ended August 31, 1993 and 1992

Fund balance, August 31, 1991	$14,144,302
Depreciation expense	(1,791,662)
Interest expense	(4,379,373)
Appropriation from general fund (Note 11)	4,975,360
Transfer from general fund (Note 12)	3,686,036
Fund balance, August 31, 1992	16,634,663
Depreciation expense	(1,883,813)
Interest expense	(5,186,545)
Appropriation from general fund (Note 11)	5,970,432
Transfer from general fund (Note 12)	2,462,463
Fund balance, August 31, 1993	$17,997,200

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

GENERAL FUND STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITY

for the years ended August 31, 1993 and 1992

	1993 Budget	1993 Actual	1992 Actual
Revenue:			
Membership dues (Note 2)	$165,657,500	$167,346,237	$158,774,193
Other income, fees and services	350,000	346,689	796,108
Total revenue	166,007,500	167,692,926	159,570,301
Expenses by area:			
Collective Bargaining and Compensation	1,429,875	1,411,984	1,439,889
Communications	6,825,144	6,781,672	6,891,916
Education, Business and Outreach	805,420	817,312	638,061
Education Policy and Professional Practice	4,130,940	3,891,926	3,486,404
Government Relations	9,762,897	10,409,019	8,874,422
Human and Civil Rights	4,589,580	4,587,244	4,957,103
Legal Services	20,855,939	20,543,978	19,196,267
Membership and Affiliates	59,476,248	60,023,916	56,522,730
National Center for Innovation	1,813,500	1,758,479	1,632,602
Publishing	7,639,132	7,552,598	7,709,593
Research	6,150,890	5,899,577	5,847,706
Administration	12,929,175	13,955,596	12,274,733
Business and Finance	5,844,405	5,836,549	5,537,770
Data Processing	5,330,879	5,450,572	5,134,385
Governance	10,090,144	9,910,241	11,006,956
Total expenses by area	157,674,168	158,830,663	151,150,537
Other expenses and appropriations:			
NFIE (Note 7)	2,300,000	2,300,000	2,300,000
Mortgage/building renovation (Notes 10 and 11)	6,000,000	6,051,131	5,996,421
Total other expenses and appropriations	8,300,000	8,351,131	8,296,421
Total	165,974,168	167,181,794	159,446,958
Excess of revenue over expenses and appropriations	$ 33,332	$ 511,132	$ 123,343

SCHEDULES OF AREA EXPENSES BY TYPE

for the years ended August 31, 1993 and 1992

	1993	1992
Salaries and benefits (Notes 2 and 4)	$ 50,566,085	$ 46,452,602
Grants to, and joint projects with, state and local associations	48,551,607	44,852,518
Kate Frank/DuShane Unified Legal Services Program expenditures	12,595,034	11,970,667
Travel	14,284,349	12,863,228
Publications costs, net of advertising income	3,846,501	4,141,766
Outside services (including consultants, legal, Educators Employment Liability Insurance, printing and National Media Campaign)	19,207,083	21,101,955
Machinery rentals, repairs, materials and supplies	2,143,417	2,269,907
Office expenses	3,562,046	3,943,294
Administrative expenses	4,074,541	3,554,600
Total area expenses by type	$158,830,663	$151,150,537

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

1. ORGANIZATION

The National Education Association of the United States (NEA) is a nonprofit corporation incorporated under a special Act of the United States Congress. Its mission statement reads: "To fulfill the promise of a democratic society, the National Education Association shall promote the cause of quality public education and advance the profession of education; expand the rights and further the interests of educational employees; and advocate human, civil, and economic rights for all."

2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of presentation

The financial statements of NEA have been prepared on the accrual basis. To ensure observance with its bylaws, the resources of NEA are classified for accounting and reporting purposes into funds established according to their nature and purpose. The assets, liabilities, fund balances and changes in fund balances are reported in the following fund groups:

General Fund

The bylaws of NEA provide that the General Fund shall comprise all income received in the form of dues, interest, dividends, fees, earnings from advertising, sales of NEA publications and payments for services and funds received by gift, bequest, devise or transfer to NEA, which are not specifically designated for deposit in the Capital Improvement Fund.

Special Purpose Funds

NEA has various Special Purpose Funds which consist of restricted funds or funds designated for specific projects and purposes. Special Purpose Funds include activities such as the UniServ Fund, NEA-Retired Program Fund, and the administration of various services such as insurance plans for members. These funds also include the activity of Member Benefits Corporation (MBC), a wholly-owned subsidiary of NEA. MBC provides support to the Member Benefits Program primarily in the areas of membership services, affiliate support, marketing and training.

Capital Improvement Fund

The bylaws of NEA provide that the Capital Improvement Fund shall comprise the properties and permanent investments of NEA and other funds, or properties received by gift, devise, bequest or transfer for deposit in the Fund. Disbursement from the Capital Improvement Fund to acquire new properties or to provide for major long-term improvements in existing properties, must be authorized by a two-thirds vote of the Board of Directors. Expenditures from this Fund for any other purpose must be authorized by a two-thirds vote of the Representative Assembly.

General Fund Budget

The budget of NEA is designed to achieve the mission and strategic objectives of NEA. The budget amounts included in the statements of General Fund activity are as approved by NEA's Representative Assembly and amended by the Board of Directors, as set forth in the guidelines approved by the Representative Assembly and the Board of Directors.

NEA-Retired Program

NEA offers retired life memberships through a special purpose fund known as the NEA-Retired Program. Payments to the fund qualify retired members for certain services provided to active members, as well as services designed specifically for retired persons. Payments to the fund are recorded as deferred income when received and amortized over the estimated life expectancy of its members.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash equivalents consist of deposits and securities with initial terms of maturity of less

continued on next page

NEA FINANCIAL REPORT

than three months and are recorded at cost which approximates market.

Membership dues

Membership dues are recognized as income over the membership year, which is September 1 through August 31. Dues are assessed to members as provided in the bylaws. An estimated provision for uncollectibles, write-offs and cancellations is charged against membership dues revenue.

In accordance with the bylaws, a percentage of the membership dues is allocated to UniServ grants, (which are included in the expenses of Membership and Affiliates), whereby NEA provides grants to affiliates to assist in funding their staff representatives whose responsibilities are to implement, and coordinate programs of NEA.

Accrued severance pay

NEA has a policy entitling employees with over 10 years of service to severance pay equal to 10 weeks of salary. NEA recognizes the liability for severance pay at the time the employee reaches 10 years of employment and is entitled to the severance pay.

3. PROPERTY, EQUIPMENT AND DEPRECIATION

As of August 31, 1993, the components of NEA's property and equipment were as follows:

Land	$ 1,753,777
Building, net of accumulated depreciation of $10,920,338	66,863,549
Equipment, net of accumulated depreciation of $13,017,148	7,164,050
	$75,781,376

NEA records depreciation on its building in the Capital Improvement Fund. This depreciation is recorded using the straight-line method over the estimated useful life of the building of 40 years. Depreciation on the building was approximately $1,884,000 and $1,792,000 in 1993 and 1992, respectively.

NEA capitalizes furnishings and equipment with a cost in excess of $2,500 and depreciates these assets using the straight-line method over 3 to 10 years.

4. RETIREMENT BENEFITS

NEA participates in a multi-employer, defined-benefit retirement plan which is noncontributory for NEA employees and which covers substantially all permanent employees. Approximately 54% of the employees covered under the plan are employed by NEA; the remaining 46% are employees of various state and local affiliates of NEA. NEA's policy is to fund retirement costs accrued.

NEA's retirement contribution expense for the fiscal years ended 1993 and 1992, respectively, were approximately $5,568,000 and $4,718,000. The accumulated plan benefits and plan net assets available for benefits as of the date of the latest actuarial valuation are presented below:

	January 1, 1993	1992
Actuarial present value of accumulated benefits:		
Vested	$101,738,402	$ 87,692,526
Nonvested	16,550,627	14,691,917
	$118,289,029	$102,384,443
Net assets available for benefits	$172,532,996	$152,232,340

The increase in the actuarial present value of accumulated benefits reflects plan amendments including a standard cost of living adjustment for retirement benefits.

The actuarial present value of accumulated plan benefits ignores the effects of future compensation increases on the benefits that participants will receive for their past service. If this value is adjusted for projected salary increases, consistent with the assumed rate of return, the adjusted actuarial present value of accumulated plan benefits would be approximately $150,012,000 and $132,500,000 as of January 1, 1993 and 1992, respectively.

The assumed rate of return used in determining the actuarial present value of accumulated plan benefits was 8.5% for 1993 and 1992. As of January 1, 1993, the retirement plan had no unfunded liabilities.

NEA's employee's are also eligible to participate in the 401(k) Salary Reduction Plan of the National Education Association (the Plan) in which the employee can make voluntary, tax-deferred contributions within specified limits. The Plan was established under the provisions of Internal Revenue Code Subsection 401(k) and has received a favorable determination as to its tax status. NEA's contributions to the Plan are based on a set percentage of employee contributions which amounted to approximately $1,145,000 and $903,000 for the years ended August 31, 1993 and 1992, respectively.

In addition to providing pension benefits, NEA provides various post-retirement health care and life insurance benefits for retirees. Substantially all of NEA's employees are eligible for these benefits upon retirement. The annual cost for providing such benefits to current retirees is expensed as the premiums are payable, and amounted to approximately $1,121,000 for fiscal year 1993 and $951,000 for fiscal year 1992.

As of August 31, 1993 and 1992, NEA has accrued approximately $7,900,000 to provide post-retirement health care benefits for present retirees and eligible active employees upon retirement. SFAS 106 - Employers' Accounting for Postretirement Benefits Other Than Pensions requires recognition of the costs of the benefits over the employees years of service. Management is currently reviewing these benefits and associated costs at this time. This Statement is effective for the Association's fiscal year ending August 31, 1994.

5. BANK LINE OF CREDIT

NEA has a line of credit of $7,500,000 from a commercial bank at the bank's prime interest rate. As of August 31, 1993, the bank's prime interest rate was 6.0% per annum. As of August 31, 1993 and 1992, no borrowings were outstanding.

6. NATIONAL EDUCATION EMPLOYEES ASSISTANCE FUND, INC.

The National Education Employees Assistance Fund, Inc. (NEEAF) is a nonprofit corporation established for the purpose of providing financial and other assistance to member organizations and their individual members involved in disputes over terms and conditions of employment. In this capacity, NEEAF, from time to time, has guaranteed loans made by lending institutions to members who were involved in such disputes. These loans are collateralized by letters of credit from those state affiliates which are members of NEEAF and also by NEA's guarantee in the amount of approximately $2,500,000. In the event of default on a loan, the bylaws of NEEAF provide that the bank shall first draw upon the letter of credit of the state affiliate from which the funds were transmitted and, thereafter, proportionately from all other letters of credit, including NEA's line of credit.

As of August 31, 1993, NEA is contingently liable for $498,516 of the $997,031 in loans guaranteed by NEEAF in the event of default. Subsequent to August 31, 1993, NEEAF guaranteed additional loans of $903,669 for an additional contingent liability of $451,835.

7. NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF EDUCATION

The National Foundation for the Improvement of Education (NFIE) was created in 1969 by the National Education Association as a tax-exempt public foundation to improve the quality of public education in the United States. NFIE has a separate Board of Directors and operates independently of the NEA. Accordingly, the accompanying financial statements do not include the activity of NFIE.

NFIE develops strategies that address the most challenging problems confronting American education. NFIE has designed its direction to develop programs in three focus areas: improvement of students' educational success, improvement of teachers' professional capability and improvement of the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction.

During the years ended August 31, 1993 and 1992 payments totaling $2,300,000 were made to NFIE. Of these amounts, approximately $1,800,000 per year was allocated for an endowment that will help fund programs to meet critical needs of students and teachers in years to come. The remaining funds were provided to cover administrative and programmatic support services of the NFIE.

8. COMMITMENTS AND CONTINGENCIES

NEA leases office space at a number of locations under noncancelable operating leases. Future minimum lease payments under these leases as of August 31, 1993, are as follows:

1994	$ 253,761
1995	186,663
1996	113,252
1997	74,572
1998	39,212
	$ 667,460

Rental expense for all operating leases was approximately $359,000 in 1993 and $496,000 in 1992.

NEA has been named as a party in several legal matters, the outcome of which cannot presently be determined. Management believes that the net results of these claims will not have a material impact on NEA.

9. INCOME TAXES

Under provisions of Section 501(c)(5) of the Internal Revenue Code and the applicable income tax regulations of the District of Columbia, NEA is exempt from taxes on income, other than taxes on unrelated business income. Since NEA has incurred a cumulative loss from these unrelated business activities, no provision for income taxes has been recorded in the accompanying financial statements.

10. MORTGAGE FINANCING

On October 15, 1991, the existing construction loan of $35,404,014 along with the outstanding balance on the line of credit in the amount of $7,403,539 was refinanced into a permanent mortgage loan with a 20-year maturity in the amount of $52,000,000 at an average interest rate of 10.125% collateralized by NEA's headquarters office building and personal property.

The future maturities of the loan payable as of August 31, 1993 are as follows:

Year ending August 31,	
1994	$ 866,264
1995	957,299
1996	1,057,897
1997	2,799,007
1998	1,463,441
Thereafter	43,476,218
	$50,620,126

11. MORTGAGE/BUILDING RENOVATION

Mortgage/building renovation expenses and appropriations include mortgage payments of $5,970,432 and $4,975,360 which includes principal and interest, paid by the general fund and appropriated to the capital improvement fund, on the newly renovated NEA headquarters building and incidental non-capitalizable costs related to completion of the building for the years ended August 31, 1993 and 1992, respectively.

12. INTERFUND TRANSFER

A permanent transfer from the General Fund to the Capital Improvement Fund of $2,462,463 and $3,686,036 has been recorded as of August 31, 1993 and 1992, respectively, representing additional building renovation, construction financing and mortgage settlement charges.

BENEFITS OF JOINING NEA

The National Education Association plays a vital role in the united effort to provide services to maintain and improve terms and conditions of employment of educational employees. Resources provided, through unified membership, aid in the delivery of programs at the state and local Association levels.

The following is a breakdown of how NEA dues dollars for 1993-94 are allocated to support and represent its members and affiliates in their efforts to achieve the mission of the National Education Association.

HOW YOUR DUES DOLLARS ARE ALLOCATED

The Uniserv Staffing Program provides financial support to every state affiliate to advance the program of direct staff services to local Associations and members for enhancement of collective bargaining, professional skill, help in crises, and for day-to-day supervision of rights and benefits.	$21.76
General Field Assistance to help local and state affiliates in achieving improved compensation, and in member representations, organizational development, crisis resolution, and maintenance of membership.	6.82
Direct Participation in Collective Bargaining and improving compensation with a special emphasis on health care issues.	2.12
Legislative and Political Activities to influence all levels of policy makers including legislation to increase funds for education, the right to bargain, and improved portable retirement plans.	5.39
Training of Elected Leaders and Staff in skills basic to protecting members' rights and building members' power. Thousands receive this support each year as they learn to negotiate, process grievances, and perform other functions of importance to members.	.55
External Public Relations and Internal Communications to enhance the image of public education as well as regular internal reports to members, leaders, and affiliates through printed and electronic media.	8.60
Legal Defense at various levels involving the protection and enforcement of rights of members (includes $1,000,000 of employment liability insurance protection for each member).	13.47
Development of an Assertive Urban Plan to tackle the problems facing urban educators and students in our communities and schools.	.84
Strengthen the Effectiveness of Locals and expand and improve the Organization's capacity to effectively represent all categories of education employees.	4.45
Human and Civil Rights Advocacy and Awareness programs to promote equity, to advance freedom of inquiry in education, to protect the job rights of education employees, to further the organizational leadership role of minorities and women, and to protect the Association from attack.	3.04
Advocate Research to maintain computerized banks of educational, financial, and socioeconomic data to meet affiliates' needs in more effectively responding to the interests of members in such areas as instruction, negotiations, and legislative activity.	2.96
Improvement of Teaching and Learning to advance new innovative concepts and methods in teaching and learning that can improve the job performance of members and the quality of public schools; and develop experimental programs relating to school restructuring and education reform in general.	4.08
Governance Costs for the Representative Assembly, Board of Directors, Executive Committee, standing committees, and other costs of member involvement in policy development, service, and benefit programs.	5.83
Data Processing Capabilities to provide necessary data to support all Association activities listed above.	3.57
Organizational Maintenance Costs for administration and building upkeep.	7.46
Business and Finance Services to conduct the business affairs of the Association ($3.64) and provide funding for the mortgage repayment of the NEA headquarters building ($3.43).	7.07
Contingency to meet emergencies and unforeseen crises at national, state, and local levels.	.99
NEA Dues	$99.00

NEA ELECTIONS

Votes Set for Three Executive Offices

What the rules say about running for key NEA offices.

Delegates to the 1994 NEA Representative Assembly, to be held July 3-6 in New Orleans, Louisiana, will elect a secretary-treasurer and two Executive Committee members. All three officers will serve three-year terms, beginning September 1, 1994.

As a result of an amendment to NEA Bylaw 6-1 adopted by the 1993 Representative Assembly, candidates for executive officer and Executive Committee positions must be nominated by April 15 of the year in which the election is to take place. Nominations for the three positions to be voted on by the 1994 Representative Assembly must be mailed to the NEA Executive Office or filed in person on or before April 15, 1994. If mailed, the nominations must be postmarked no later than April 15. The deadline does not apply to elections to fill at-large positions on the Executive Committee or Board of Directors or elections to fill midterm vacancies.

Candidates for the executive officer and Executive Committee positions must have been NEA Active members for two years immediately preceding the election. Filing forms and election information, including the Campaign Regulations for Candidates for NEA Office, are available from the NEA Executive Office, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington DC 20036. Submission of filing forms does not constitute nomination for office.

NEA provides a number of services for candidates who have filed for office. For example, candidates who have filed by April 1 may submit a candidate statement (not to exceed 125 words) and photograph for publication in the May issue of *NEA Today*. This service and others are described in the Campaign Regulations for Candidates for NEA Office, available from the Executive Office.

The Representative Assembly may also need to elect at-large NEA directors representing ethnic minorities, administrators, classroom teachers in higher education, and Active members employed in educational support positions pursuant to Article V, Section 1(c), (d), (e), and (f) of the Constitution. If such elections are necessary, the presidents and executive directors of state affiliates, the Board of Directors and Executive Committee, and the NEA Committee on Minority Affairs will be notified in June 1994.

Tax Notice

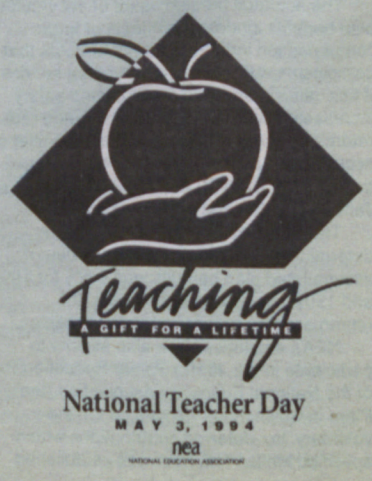
The Revenue Reconciliation Act of 1993 has eliminated the individual income tax deduction for lobbying expenses paid or incurred as part of membership dues on or after December 31, 1993. This change will affect only those members who itemize deductions and meet the two percent requirement for additional miscellaneous deductions.

Those members will not be able to deduct as union dues the five percent of NEA's 1993-1994 dues attributable to lobbying. This is a total of $4.95. Members should also check with their state and local Associations for the amount of non-deductible state and local dues spent on lobbying.

Please note: This change is effective for the 1994 income tax year, which affects your tax return due April 15, 1995.

Teacher Day '94

The 1994 Teacher Day art and slogan have been selected. The logo for this very special day was done by a Boise, Idaho, artist. A similar version of the logo first appeared in a poster done for the Idaho Education Association.



"How about a toll-free hotline where the person who answers the phone can actually answer my question?"

"Our school can't always afford fancy software. Isn't there a way to make it more affordable?"

"I'm waiting for a computer that's built just for schools. Not an office computer disguised as a school computer."

Your words.

"Fund-raising ideas, that's what I need help with. School budgets need all the supplementing they can get."

"I think it'd be great if teachers and administrators helped develop products. After all, we're the ones who actually use them."

"I'd love to be able to call when I have a question, and get an answer—a quick answer."

Our actions.

The EduQuest toll-free Resource Center.

In your words, this is one of our biggest successes. Every day this helpful resource is invaluable for thousands of educators nationwide. Simply call our toll-free line to talk with courteous, qualified professionals who understand your questions and provide intelligent answers.

They not only know educational hardware, software and how to enhance your classroom, they have also been instructed by professional educators to understand your classroom needs.

The more words you give, the more actions we give back.

On an ongoing basis, we sit with educators like you to find out exactly what you need.

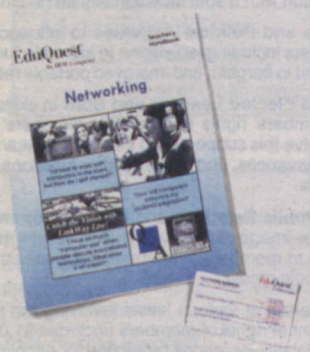
That's why we continue to offer cost-efficient, prepackaged K-6 and 7-12 courseware. Computers designed and constructed for schools only. Plus award-winning math, science and reading software—from Stories & More and Math & More to Writing to Write®

All in all, they're everything you've asked for. And then some.

The new Networking Handbook and other FREE thank-you gifts.

Call 1 800 IBM-4EDU, ext 305A for: 1) your free copy of the new Networking Handbook explaining how computers in the classroom can be interconnected to optimize both teaching and learning; 2) a handy reference card with phone and fax numbers, including those of our Resource Center; and 3) product information that shows you how we're listening and responding to your needs with the kind of technology and support that you expect.

Do it soon, supplies are limited. And thanks again for your input. From us, you can expect even more output.



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Your NEA

Q & A

A Key Committee

Who's on NEA's Executive Committee?
The Executive Committee consists of nine members—the president, vice-president, secretary-treasurer, and six members elected at-large by delegates to the Representative Assembly.

How are members elected?
Committee members are elected by majority vote in secret ballot elections held at the RA. Nominations shall be submitted in writing to the NEA Executive Director by April 15 of the year in which the election is to take place.

To be eligible to serve on the Committee, candidates must have been active members of the Association for at least two years preceding the election.

Why does NEA have an Executive Committee?
Decision-making at NEA is a democratic and deliberate process. The Representative Assembly brings in more than 8,000 delegates to its annual meeting to serve as final arbiters of NEA policy.

Between meetings of the RA, the 160-member NEA Board of Directors acts for the Association and determines how new business items and policy mandates adopted by the RA will be carried out.

Between Board meetings, however, there are still areas of Association business and fiscal matters that need to be managed.

The size of the Executive Committee makes it possible for these details to be addressed in a timely and efficient manner.

What are the responsibilities of the Executive Committee?
Established by the NEA Constitution, the Executive Committee carries out the directives of the NEA Representative Assembly.

The Committee is authorized to handle such matters as chartering affiliates, reducing dues under conditions specified by the Board, and determining membership classes.

Is being on the Executive Committee a full-time job?
The three executive officers serve full-time. The other six members work with full-time teaching partners, who take over when Committee members are working on behalf of the Association.

How often does the Executive Committee meet?
The Committee meets approximately 10 times a year.

SPEAKING OUT ON THE ISSUES

NEA Sets Sights on Reducing Violence

Continuing efforts to fight the rise of violence in children's lives, NEA recently hosted national hearings on the topic and spoke out against violence in video games.

Meeting at NEA headquarters, Children's Express, a child advocacy and leadership organization, created high drama by bringing together children whose lives have been affected by violence. Their testimony became compelling national news last fall.

In addition, Children's Express brought together political figures and adult witnesses with expertise in violence prevention in schools and communities. Speakers included Attorney General Janet Reno, Rep. Patricia Schroeder (D-Colo.), and pollster Lou Harris.

Howard University's television station provided gavel-to-gavel coverage of the hearings and sent a one-hour feed daily to other public-TV stations nationwide.

Carolyn Salisbury

Maryland student Leon Merritt was nearly killed in a drive-by shooting.

Several weeks later, NEA took issue with the new generation of video games that depict and glorify graphic acts of violence.

In a Capitol Hill press conference, NEA Vice-President Bob Chase said, "In the world of video games today, children are encouraged and even rewarded for committing electronic acts that are nothing short of heinous, sadistic, and barbaric."

He praised legislation introduced by Senator Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.) that would create an independent national council to push the industry to reduce video violence.

"Senator Lieberman's proposal is sensitive to our First Amendment concerns and gives the video game companies the opportunity to regulate themselves," Chase said.

"We stand behind the Senator's efforts to establish a warning system for parents concerned about the violence contained in video games."

WORKING FOR YOU

Broadcasting Solutions

NEA's National Center for Innovation looks for concrete solutions to problems in schools. And it turns Barby Halstead-Worrell loose to manage the broadcasting of those solutions via *Teacher TV,* the Emmy-award-winning show developed by NEA and the Learning Channel.

As a member of the *Teacher TV* editorial board along with executives from the Learning Channel, Halstead-Worrell's job is to make sure story ideas are "pedagogically sound and organizationally viable."

Halstead-Worrell devotes about 50 percent of her time to research. She works with NEA affiliates as well as other education advocacy groups to track down leads. "We look for sites that are solution-oriented, research-based, and replicable," says Halstead-Worrell.

A recent Emmy-winning show, for instance, focused on

Barby Halstead-Worrell heads Teacher TV, one of several NEA National Center for Innovation projects.

how to deal with school violence in a way that looked beyond metal detectors. It focused on helping kids deal with their frustrations and anger in non-violent ways. (For further details on the show, which airs Sunday at 6 p.m., see TV Tips on page 12.)

Halstead-Worrell reviews scripts for the show with a fine-tooth comb, ferreting out stereotyping and other unwanted nuances. And she manages the distribution of show summaries for callers to the show's toll-free number.

Her background at every level of Association work—from the classroom to NEA's affiliate services organizing arm—makes her uniquely suited for a program about teachers and school staff.

She also devotes a portion of her time to the Center's Next Generation program. She's working to bring together experts from the fields of science, social science, the arts, technology, and business to focus on the next generation of education efforts.

SHORT TAKES

Life member alert. If you're a life member of NEA and want to know the details of what went on at the 1993 NEA Representative Assembly, you can now find out. Clip the *NEA Today* address label and send it along with your request to NEA Membership Records, Attn: Vanette Wiley, 1201 16th Street, N.W., Washington DC 20036...

New Prostate Cancer Brochure. NEA's Health Information Network (HIN) has just published an informational brochure on prostate cancer that details early detection and treatment options. To get a copy, call the HIN at 202/822-7570 or write the Network at 1201 16th St, N.W., Washington, DC 20036...

Bone Marrow Registry. Victims of fatal blood disease are being matched with unrelated volunteer marrow donors as part of the National Marrow Donor Program. If you're between 18 and 55 and in good health, all you need to do is take a blood test to "type" your blood for basic human leukocyte antigens. Your chances of being called are less than 20 percent. If you are called, you'll take a few more tests to confirm the match.

The process of donating bone marrow involves being placed under general anesthesia while the marrow is extracted from your pelvic bones. The result is some aching over the next 10 days—and possibly a life saved. For information about the program, call 800/627-7692...

Presidential Classroom. Presidential Classroom for Young Americans, Inc. thanks all teachers who've helped the organization open the doors of the political process to young student leaders over the past 25 years. During the annual week-long Young Americans program, students engage in discussions of current issues with influential leaders from each branch of government, the military, the foreign diplomatic corps, the media, and special interest groups. To date, more than 63,000 student leaders have participated.

Letters

Moral? Majority?

I enjoy the free sharing of ideas. I feel that educators must be open to new ideas themselves or risk becoming stagnant. In that light, I don't mind reading views that are considerably different than my own.

But I was shocked that *NEA Today* gave a forum to the hateful rhetoric expressed by Judy Park (Debate, December). Her writings presented myths and hateful labels as though they were fact.

Such writings as those connecting lesbians and gays with pedophiles and claiming that those who are working for lesbian and gay rights are "pleasure-obsessed and interested only in their own self-gratification" are poisonous and don't deserve to be printed in a journal dedicated to academic betterment.

I resent her statement that her views represent the majority of moral people. They do not. While I can see that a person could make a good argument against including information about gay families in a first grade curriculum, this should not serve as a platform for her to spew the rest of her propoganda.

I sincerely doubt that *NEA Today* would have printed a letter that expressed similar views about any other group of people, be they racial, ethnic, political, religious, or otherwise.

I enjoy reading the Debate section. However, I would like to encourage the editorial board to exercise considerably more caution in the future.

Doug Wendle
Sacramento, California

Judy Park didn't answer the question, "Should First Graders Learn about Gay Families?" Instead, she wrote almost exclusively on the issue of sex, as if discussing gay families meant explaining what gay parents do in their bedroom.

Nowhere in her essay does Park refer to the children of gay parents. How should their needs be met in our schools? How should a first grade teacher respond if the students in his or her class discover that Johnny has two moms or Jennifer has two dads? Surely that teacher would talk about how important it is to be raised by loving parents. Surely the teacher would respond that all children should treat each other with respect and kindness no matter who their parents are.

If Park had specific concerns regarding learning about gay families, she should have addressed them. Rather than focusing on issues of sexual morality, Judy Park should have answered the question that was asked.

Patrick Rumaker
Pitman, New Jersey

Save Tracking

UCLA professor and detracking advocate Jeannie Oakes' condescension toward opponents of ability grouping was insufferable (Meet, November).

Tracking may be the straw man of the '90s, but there are still plenty of us who find ability grouping a logical and defensible starting point. So long as between-group differences are greater than within-group differences, ability grouping makes great sense. Unfortunately, most of the researchers are too stupid even to consider the criteria.

Terms like heterogeneous and homogeneous only reveal the speaker's ignorance of simple statistical techniques like cluster analysis. Research on homogeneous and heterogeneous grouping is therefore bad research.

Shame on *NEA Today* and all politically-correct dormice. Education is a fundamentally elitist enterprise. Educators believe that educated people are better than uneducated people. To blush at ability grouping is to throw out the baby with the bath water.

D. Truman
Storrs, Connecticut

Oh please, I am so sick of hearing that detracking benefits every student. Tell that to the above-average child who has spent the morning "helping" a student who is behind instead of being enriched and challenged to his own capabilities.

If parents have a child with a disability and do not search for every means possible to get that child to potential, we are appalled. But if parents of an above-average student try to get him challenging courses that help him reach his potential, they are "elitist."

Why aren't Chapter 1 remedial programs considered "elitist" for the slower student? Why aren't those funds split fairly to challenge all students with the best possible education for each individual?

To bring in the concept that tracking is racism is just an attempt to add a new dimension to an ill-devised concept and gather positive opinion for a weak argument.

To say that breaking up "bad actors" and dispersing them in various classes is beneficial is another myth foisted on the public. The old saying "one bad apple can spoil the whole barrel" is often true.

If Oakes had "differing expectations" for her tracked seventh grade English classes in 1971, I'm glad she recognized her teaching problems and left the classroom.

Unfortunately, she is now imposing her prejudiced ideas on a larger scale. If she wants to use students for "peer-tutoring," please have her share her salary. If she wants teachers to have more planning time for all her "wonderful" ideas, please talk to the school boards.

Why must the teaching profession jump on every bandwagon that comes down the pike? The schools are not solely responsible for the malignancy that has invaded our society and cities.

D. Perry
Lancaster, New York

I fail to understand how intelligent people can argue that our country is better served by holding back our most capable students to serve as peer tutors for their slower peers ("Is There Life After Tracking?", November).

It's about time we learned to teach all students adequately—whether or not gifted or talented students are in the class—and to allow our nation's best to develop their gifts and abilities to the maximum level at their own pace.

Michael McKeehan
Cheney, Washington

In trying to meet the needs of the middle and bottom students, are we wasting the valuable talents of top students? If public schools detrack, they risk losing the brighter children to private schools that will meet their need for challenge.

Along with the children will go the support for public schools at the voting booth and in real tax dollars. Then who will lose? All the children that remain in the public schools, and our nation as a whole. Look out vouchers, here we come!

Debra Prizer Spering
Medford, New Jersey

Lerning Tu Spel

I cannot believe what I have just read (Debate, November). A teacher argued against the "teaching of inventive spelling" because it makes it difficult to transition to formal spelling and will lead to more children having behavior disorders and being labeled as learning disabled. Can she be serious?

Inventive spelling is not "taught." What educator would teach children incorrect spellings? Inventive spelling is "used" by children, just as inventive speech is "used" by infants.

When a child says, "Mama gived me a cookie," it's not because he was taught the word "gived," but because he's learning to manipulate language in order to be understood. Should we assume that this child will never learn the correct way and worry that someday he will need special education services?

My students need the freedom to record their thoughts without fear of having their work red-inked and downgraded because of spelling errors. I believe that this is the practice that discourages students, leads to behavior disorders, and results in more referrals for remedial services.

Why are we learning spelling? To become a nation of spellers, or to become creative, divergent-thinking problem solvers who can communicate with each other?

Joanne Piazzi
Barrington, New Hampshire

As our spoken language continues to drift further and further from our written language, each succeeding generation is going to have a harder and harder time learning to spell it.

What we need is not a spelling methods debate but serious spelling reform, so that the language students write at least resembles the language they speak.

Lawrence Nolan
Garnett, Kansas

Who's Intolerant?

Kathy Carlson's article, "Banned in Billings" (Sounding Board, November), was a little too condescending for me. She writes as if all NEA members feel as she does. What other opinion could there be?

I am a teacher from California who believes that the illustrations [in *King Stork*] are, indeed, too suggestive. We have to draw the line somewhere regarding morals, and this book crosses it. There are many quality books that have characters that are fully clothed. Or don't we care about teen pregnancies, AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, etc.?

Denise Gumaer
Chino, California

I have just finished reading the letters between Kathy Carlson and [illustrator] Trina Schart Hyman. I wish to send both of them this open letter:

You two think that you have the moral high ground on this issue. However, your letters smack of intolerance to others. What right do you have to dictate to anyone what are the moral issues here?

The people in Billings have every right to their opinion, and they firmly believe that theirs is the moral high ground, and that you, by promoting this book, have sunk to a new moral low.

Just because you feel that you're right doesn't make it so. There are many feminist organizations and individuals that would label this book pornographic and degrading to women. Would you be as intolerant to them as you are to the citizens of Billings?

As educators, we want parents to get involved in the education of their children. Does this mean only if the parents support our point of view? If we're going to solicit help and input from parents and the public, then we must be willing to accept their decisions. If we don't, all of this talk of partnerships with parents is a farce.

A. Kent Jaussi
Secro Woolley, Washington

Health Care Despair

I agree with Keith Geiger that America's health care crisis packs a powerful punch—but disagree with President Clinton's health care package (President's Viewpoint, November).

Geiger considers the Clinton plan to be the most enlightened social legislation in more that 50 years. Truly enlightened people quickly see the plan is a big step toward socialism. Geiger may want us to join the battle, but I would encourage the NEA not to for two reasons.

1. The battle for health care is far more social and political than it is educational. The only need for the NEA's involvement then becomes the protection of its members.

2. Under the Clinton plan, many Michigan members may lose benefits and have to pay part of their premiums. The NEA should concentrate its efforts on protecting our hard-earned benefits.

Students in despair weigh on everybody's heart, but the heart of the issue is how to deal with it and who should deal with it. I would encourage people to fight this battle in their own way.

Dirk Koorstra
Zeeland, Michigan

The Clinton health care proposal is one of six being considered by Congress at this writing. Now that you have given the First Lady two pages in which to make her sales pitch (Cover story, November), do you plan to give the sponsors of the other five plans equal time?

Dudley Field
Buffalo, New York

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Debate

Should You Ever Touch a Student?

YES

Mike McKay is a fifth and sixth grade science, spelling, and language arts teacher at Glenn Elementary School in Normal, located in central Illinois. Active in his local, regional, and state Association, McKay is a past-president of the Unit Five Education Association.

NO

Barrie Beth Hansen is a music specialist at Carroll Highlands Elementary School in Takoma Park, Maryland. She is a building rep for the Prince George's County Educators Association. Until moving East five years ago, Hansen taught in Sacramento, California.

The fact that I'm both single and male would seem to say—loudly—"hands off students." Today it's thought to be too risky for any school staffer, much less a single male, to hug students, pat them on the back, or express any type of caring that involves physical contact.

The problem is that, as teachers, we're confronted daily with students who need caring, understanding, and expressions of support. We all know students who desperately require nurturing.

Yes, they need a hug, a pat on the back, and a caring adult to supplement what they get at home. Unfortunately, for many of them, such caring may substitute for what they don't get at home.

The secret for us is to exercise good judgment in the way we show our caring and concern—to do so only in the proper context, with discretion. For example, some students would be very uncomfortable or embarrassed being hugged or even complimented by their teacher. We shouldn't be demonstrative with them.

Other students are starving for attention and go out of their way to gain the teacher's attention. We should spend as much time rewarding their positive behavior as we spend reprimanding them for inappropriate behavior.

Is the touching issue complicated? Yes. Can our actions be misunderstood? Yes. Are we subject to criticism for hugging a child who is moving away, or a child who has just lost a parent in an automobile accident? Yes.

The key is discretion. As is true with most of the responsibilities of the teaching profession, the use of judgment is the difference between "healing" a child and being accused of some form of abuse.

Five years ago, a young man in my homeroom lost his father in a terrible accident. The day he returned to school, I hugged him in front of his class and his mother. Anything less would have been inappropriate.

Last fall, one of my fifth grade science students left for a new school in western New York state. I hugged her in front of her classmates and her homeroom teacher. Three weeks later, I received a letter from her saying, "Thanks for giving me a hug. I really needed it."

Students have trouble learning how to care about others if they do not feel cared about themselves. If caring about a student means a hug, then hug. If caring about a student means a reprimand, then reprimand.

Know your students and know their parents. Most important, know yourself. If you're not comfortable giving a student a hug or a pat on the back, then don't give one. Students' perceptions of your intent and feeling would be, at best, neutral or even negative.

The human heart and the human spirit require being able to give of yourself. In return, you will receive the gift of caring.

To those who say "no touching, no exceptions," I say I respect your right to say, "no, it's not worth the risk." All I ask is that you respect my right to use judgment and discretion in how I "care" about my students.

If I fail to use proper discretion, then I will be held accountable for my actions. If I use proper judgment and discretion, then I will reap one of the many benefits of being a teacher. Being cared about by your students is just as important as caring about them.

My 28 years in the education profession have not always been rewarding, and I have not always judged every student's emotional and educational growth with complete success. I continue to grow as a person as I hope my students do.

They have taught me at least as much as I have taught them. Many of them taught me that I do make a difference in their lives, and for that I am very proud and grateful.

If a hug, a pat on the back, or even "high five" had even a little to do with that feeling, then I used good judgment, discretion—and my heart. I've learned to use my heart more. It's making me a better person and, therefore, a better teacher.

On the question of touching students, I can't do better than to quote Ken Reinshuttle, UniServ director assigned to the Prince George's County Educators Association:

"Schools are no longer 'Leave It to Beaver' Land. The bottom line is simple: schools are dangerous places to work. Each time you touch a student, whether it's to demonstrate affection or to impose discipline, you're putting your job on the line."

I dislike having to say so, but Rein-shuttle's advice is exactly the advice I would have pass to along to anyone—especially a first-year teacher—who asked me what I thought about touching students.

We can no longer touch students except in extraordinary circumstances—and only then if we have exhausted all other alternatives. And when I say "we," I refer to all school staff—teachers, support staff, and administrators.

The days of the spontaneous hug, the firm disciplinary hand—the days when the school was an extension of the home—are long gone.

We live in a litigious society, with schools and educators frequently a prime target of lawsuits. Almost daily, charges of abuse against adults who work with children are splattered all over the media. They're not necessarily true.

Public accusations of physical abuse of children on the part of adult care-givers to children have reached almost witch-hunt proportions—a level totally unknown in even the recent past.

What's an educator to do? We have to protect our jobs and our futures. At one extreme, that means we stop touching students in a carefree, heedless manner. At the other, it means we meticulously monitor ourselves so that we never touch in anger, never touch to impose discipline.

It means we must develop new strategies to express our love and concern for our students.

I think as Association members or school staff members or both, we should explore these issues together and develop guidelines that could become part of a staff training package.

Here are some of the issues such training could cover:

- ➤ Categories of necessary and unnecessary touching: instructional, emergency, and medical.
- ➤ Ways of protecting ourselves when we're touching necessarily. These include explaining ourselves verbally, keeping the classroom door open, having many people present, avoiding one-on-one contact when no one else is around.
- ➤ Techniques of conflict management for use when students are violent that don't require physical contact on our part. It's not our responsibility to endanger ourselves by breaking up fistfights.
- ➤ Ways of teaching appropriate touching by example and clarifying how such touching relates to self-respect and respect for others.
- ➤ Discussion of how touching is seen in different cultures. Our schools are increasingly multicultural, and it's important that staff know, for example, that in some Southeast Asian cultures it's seen as offensive to touch the top of someone's head.

Words like "caution," "risk," and "hazard" will have to be not only part of our working vocabulary, but also guidelines for our actions.

The true violators of children may be few, but the fear of them can be life-altering, even career-threatening for us all. Children and educators alike are victimized by the violating few.

I continue to work diligently on a growing repertoire of techniques to communicate my caring and my commitment to my students. I think most children will sense our sincerity.

I plead with all of us who work with children to take seriously these precautions against touching.

The children need us—not in the courtroom, but in the classroom, where we belong, teaching and sharing our talents.

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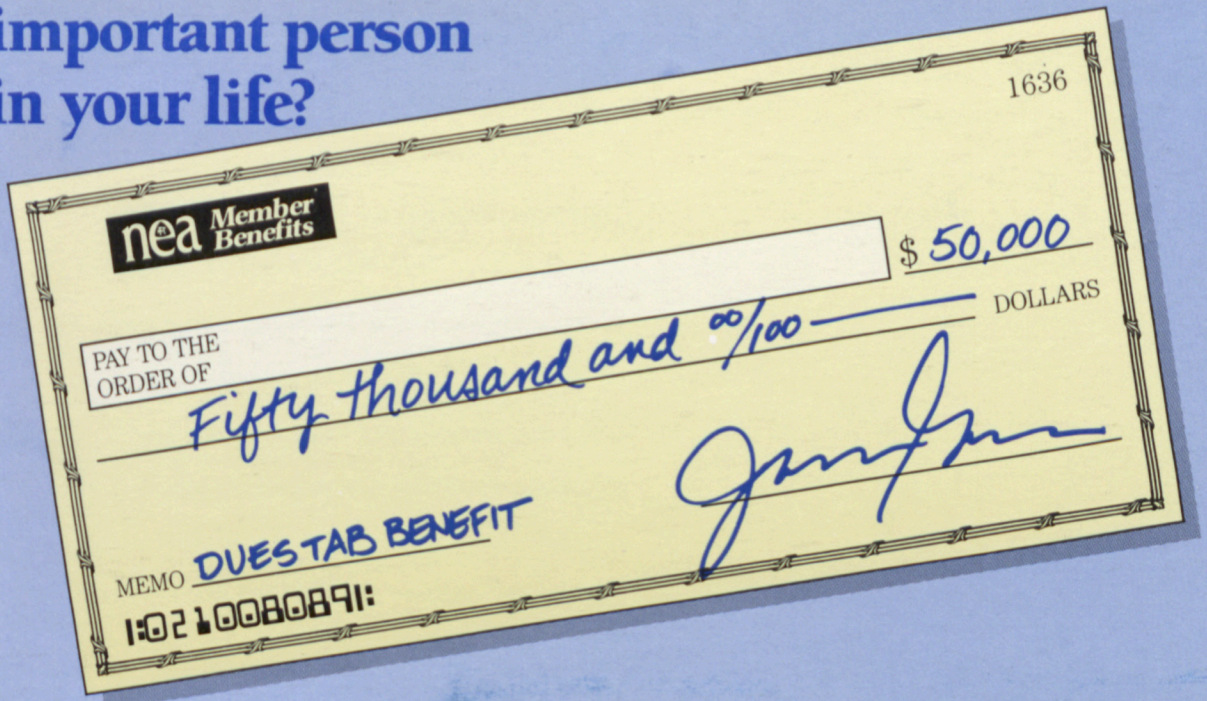

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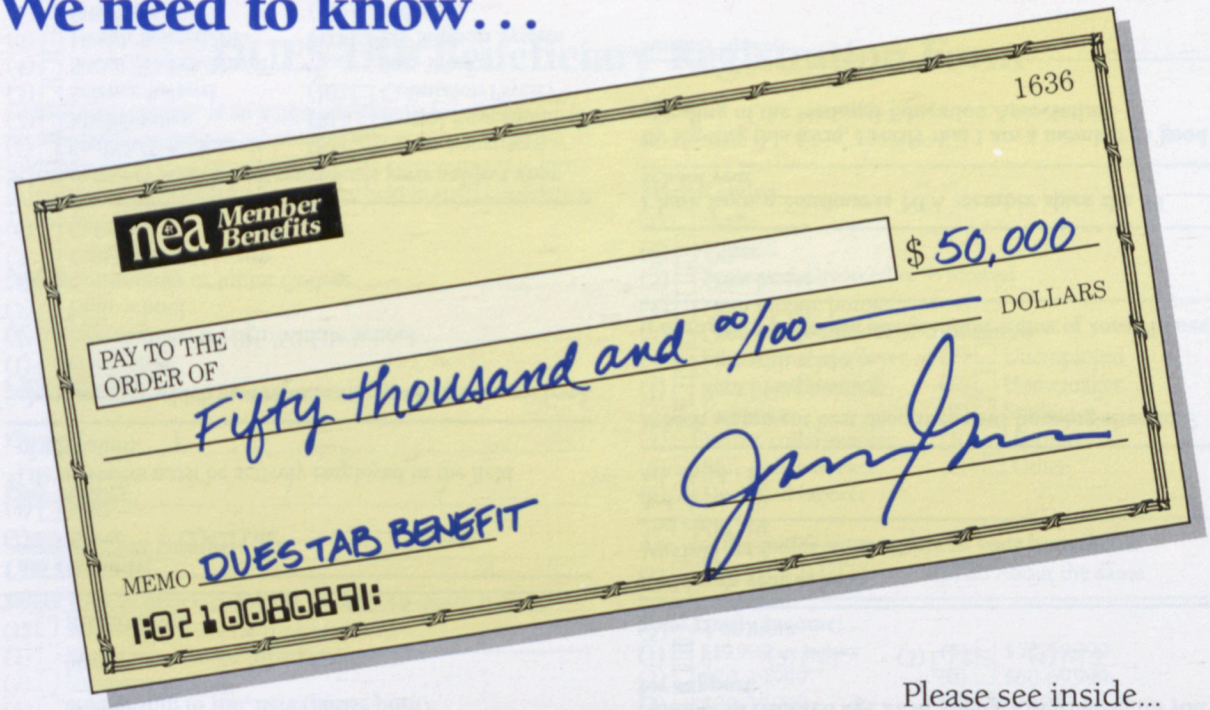

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